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Mary Megie Belden
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YALE STUDIES IN ENGLISH
LXXX

THE DRAMATIC WORK OF SAMUEL FOOTE

BY

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A Dissertation presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School
of Yale University in Candidacy for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

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Mary Megie Belden

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IN APPRECIATION

OF HER ENCOURAGEMENT

AND HER UNDERSTANDING

THIS STUDY IS DEDICATED TO

MY MOTHER

ELLEN SCRANTON BELDEN

22951

PREFACE

The renewed interest in the drama of the eighteenth century calls attention to Samuel Foote, for his dramatic work has a unique part in the stage history of that period, and his striking personality still lives in the records of its men and women. References to him are abundant in books, periodicals, letters.

But since Forster's essay, written in the middle of the last century, there has been nothing of importance devoted exclusively to Foote except the life by Percy Fitzgerald. Fitzgerald's account covers his entire career in a lively and popular style. The present work attempts to extend that study, particularly by giving contemporary sources of information. The larger part of the material has been found in magazines and newspapers, pamphlets, memoirs, and published letters. Dates of stage productions are from the London dailies which printed the management's advertisements of forthcoming plays, the *General Advertiser,* the *Public Advertiser,* and the *Gazetteer and New Daily Advertiser.* Most of these were accessible in the library of Yale University. The numbers missing from the Yale files were consulted for me in the British Museum by Miss Constance White.

Quotations from all sources are given as in the originals without correction of spelling or of other errors, and without normalizing. In quoting from Foote's plays, I have sometimes omitted negligible words without notice, as on page 163, where I have thrown three speeches together.

For assistance in my work recognition is due most of all to Professor George H. Nettleton of Yale University. I wish to express my appreciation of the interest shown by the late Professor Albert S. Cook during the years when I was preparing the manuscript for publication, and my thanks to

Dr. Robert J. Menner of Yale, for helpful criticism. Especially I feel a very genuine gratitude to Dr. Ida Langdon of Elmira for her excellent criticism and her generous and unstinting assistance in many problems. I wish also to acknowledge service rendered by Dr. Grace Thomas of Elmira and Professor Charles H. A. Wager of Oberlin, and by the librarians of Yale University, as well as by my mother, who helped me in collecting notes and gave assistance in a variety of ways. Dr. Chauncey B. Tinker called my attention to the existence of a manuscript of the *Handsome Housemaid* in the Henry E. Huntington Library, and from there I received a photostat copy of this piece of Foote's work, which I could not otherwise have read.

Mary Megie Belden

Elmira College,
May, 1929.

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PART I

FOOTE'S LIFE

CHAPTER I

Introductory

'The modern Aristophanes,' 'the Hogarth of the stage,' 'the most finished *bon vivant* of the century,'—these are terms applied in his own time to Samuel Foote. He was the author of some thirty comedies, an extraordinarily successful actor and theatrical manager, a man of striking individuality, daring, ruthless, incorrigible, irresistible.

He was born in Truro, Cornwall, where his baptism took place on the twenty-seventh of January, 1720, in the church of St. Mary's. His father, Samuel Foote, was Member of Parliament for Tiverton, Commissioner of the Prize Office, and Receiver of Fines for the Duchy. His mother, Eleanor, only daughter of Sir Edward Goodere, Bart., was descended in the female line from the Earls of Rutland.

In the Goodere family there was a marked strain of abnormality, which doubtless accounts for some of the traits of the dramatist, who strongly resembled his mother. In the case of Foote's uncle, Sir John Dinely, this quality showed itself in eccentricities of dress and behavior which made him fit material for such journals as *Kirby's Wonderful and Eccentric Museum or Magazine of Remarkable Characters.* In the immediate family circle the matter took a more serious form. Mrs. Foote's brother, Captain Samuel Goodere, murdered his elder brother, Sir John Dinely Goodere, and was executed for the deed in 1741. It was this event that made her heiress to the Goodere property. She was herself flighty,

though a woman of considerable vigor. The following letters indicate the likeness between mother and son:

> DEAR SAM,
>
> I AM in prison for debt: come and assist your loving mother,
>
> E. Foote.
>
> DEAR MOTHER,
>
> SO am I; which prevents his duty being paid to his loving mother by her affectionate son,
>
> Sam. Foote.
>
> P. S. I have sent my attorney to assist you; in the mean time let us hope for better days.[1]

Foote received his education at Worcester Grammar School and at Worcester College, Oxford, which owed its foundation and its change of name (from Gloucester Hall) to a second cousin of his, Sir T. Cooks Winford.[2] He matriculated there July 1, 1737, and left February 25, 1740,[3] without taking a degree, owing to the withdrawal of his scholarship on account of his irregularities. From Oxford he went to London and is supposed to have entered at the Inner Temple, but as his name cannot be found on the lists, it is probable he merely had rooms there. He lived in expensive chambers, dressed extravagantly, talked brilliantly, and soon made a place for himself in the circle of wits who frequented the Grecian and Bedford coffee-houses. He was supposed to have a considerable fortune. Whether or not this was true, with his extravagance, dissipation, and gambling, he was presently in pecuniary difficulties and dependent upon his own efforts for a livelihood.

The first product of his pen is charitably said to have been the result of this necessity. It was an account of the Goodere

[1] Cooke, *Foote* 2. 4. n.

[2] *Town and Country*, Oct. 1777, p. 507.

[3] See Worcester College document quoted by Percy Fitzgerald, *Samuel Foote*, pp. 17-18.

murder, entitled the *Genuine Memoirs of Sir John Dinely Goodere, Bart., who was murdered by the Contrivance of his Own Brother on Board the Ruby Man of War in King's Road, near Bristol, Jan. 19, 1740. Together with the Life History and Last Dying Words of his Brother, Captain Samuel Goodere, who was executed at Bristol on the 15th day of April, 1741, for the Horrid Murder of the said Sir J. D. Goodere. Dedicated to the Rt. Worshipful H. Combe, Mayor of Bristol. By S. Foote, of Worcester College, Oxford, etc., and nephew to the late Sir John D. Goodere.* It is not within the province of the present study to inquire at length into the authenticity of this broadsheet or the reason for Foote's writing it. It may have been to meet a pressing pecuniary situation—he is said to have raised £10 by it—or to offset the effect of spurious accounts. But whatever the extenuation, it is not a matter upon which one cares to linger. On the other hand, it can hardly be ignored, for it indicates that lack of dignity and good taste, that reckless use of any subject of popular appeal, which characterized his work throughout his life.

The serious business upon which Foote now embarked was that of acting. From childhood he had been distinguished for his powers of mimicry, and doubtless it was this fact that led him to the stage.

CHAPTER II

Early Dramatic Ventures

A brief survey of theatrical privilege from the reopening of the theatres at the Restoration until the middle of the eighteenth century will explain the situation at Foote's entrance into the field. For the half century since Charles II had granted his royal patents (1660) to Thomas Killigrew and Sir William Davenant, the successive holders of these two patents had kept, with a few exceptions, a strict monopoly in theatrical affairs. In 1723 there was opened a 'Little Theatre in the Haymarket,' which soon became popular as a place for cheap opera, satire, and burlesque; but it led a precarious existence because it had no patent. After the establishment of the theatre in Goodman's Fields (1729), which was also without patent, the experience of unauthorized companies led to a certain disregard for the patentees' prerogative; and bold competition with Covent Garden and Drury Lane was common until the passing of the Licensing Act of June 21, 1737.

New means were then devised for evading the law. These began with Giffard at Goodman's Fields. His method was rather obvious: he advertised on October 15, 1740,[1] 'At the *late* Theatre in Ayliffe Street—A Concert of Vocal and Instrumental Musick in 2 Parts—Between the Parts of the Concert will be presented *gratis* a Comedy called The Stratagem—By Persons for their diversion.' These performances continued with more or less regularity throughout the season. In the season of 1743-4[2] Macklin gathered together at the Haymarket a company of performers whom he introduced as students in training for the stage. His advertisement was

[1] Watson Nicholson, *Struggle for a Free Stage*, p. 73.
[2] Genest 4. 76.

similar to that of Giffard at Goodman's Fields: there would be a concert and after it a play by the students. 'No money will be taken at the doors,' the notice said, 'nor any person admitted, but by printed tickets, which will be delivered by Mr. Macklin at his house in Bow Street C. G.'[3] It was here that Samuel Foote made his début upon the London stage, February 6, 1744. The play that night was *Othello,* Foote taking the title rôle and Macklin that of Iago.

In the autumn Macklin returned to Drury Lane and the device he had used for evading the law was continued at the Haymarket by Theophilus Cibber, who referred to the theatre as 'Cibber's Academy in the Hay.,' and took pains to announce that the 'rehearsal' after the concert would be *gratis.*[4] But the pretense was too thin to blind the magistrates, and Cibber made no headway in the face of the legal opposition. The same thing—a free play within a pay concert—was going on at Goodman's Fields also in the season of 1746-7.[5]

In playing the part of Othello Foote attempted a type of drama for which he was entirely unqualified by nature. According to Genest,[6] he actually performed this same rôle at Drury Lane later in that first year. But thereafter his name was rarely connected with tragedy. In the winter of 1744-5 he went to Dublin and acted at the Smock Alley Theatre recently opened by Thomas Sheridan, and the next winter he was one of the regular company at Drury Lane. He played Lord Foppington in Vanbrugh's *Relapse* with Peg Woffington as Berinthia and Kitty Clive as Miss Hoyden; Sir Harry Wildair in Farquhar's *Constant Couple* with the Woffington as Lady Lurewell; Sir Novelty Fashion in Cibber's *Love's Last Shift;* Sir Courtly Nice in Crowne's

[3] *Ibid.* 4. 76.
[4] *Ibid.* 4. 170.
[5] *Ibid.* 4. 64.
[6] *Ibid.* 4. 64.

comedy of that name; Dick in Vanbrugh's *Confederacy*, and—his greatest triumph—Bayes in Buckingham's *Rehearsal*.

Foote's abilities were not those of a great actor. For these dashing characters that he first undertook to impersonate his appearance was unfavorable. He was a short, somewhat stout man, with a round, fat face, flat nose, and large mouth. But those who knew him found a redeeming feature in the sparkling, humorous eyes which the portraits do not bring out. Exceedingly bad in tragedy, he was not adapted even to genteel comedy. Davies accounts for such success as he achieved as due mainly to 'his intimacy with people of the first rank.'[7] His proper field was low comedy, as his peculiar gift was mimicry. He was not a thoroughly realistic mimic, like, for example, his contemporary, Dick Estcourt, who seemed to sink his own personality completely in that of the person mimicked. On the other hand, according to Dr. Johnson's characterization of him, he seems to have lacked the creative imagination which supersedes such realism by artistic realization. 'He gives you something different from himself,' he said, 'but not the character which he means to assume. He goes out of himself, without going into other people.'[8] And yet, there has perhaps never been a more noted mimic upon the English stage than Foote, certainly never one who competed with him as at once author and performer of characters drawn directly from known contemporary persons.

It was natural that he should turn to Bayes in the *Rehearsal* for his favorite rôle. For since Dryden's time the part had often been used as a vehicle for personal burlesque; and in Foote's own period, Garrick had preceded him in satirizing the actors through this character when he was with Giffard at Goodman's Fields in 1741-2.[9] This, it will

[7] *Garrick* 1. 198-200.
[8] Boswell 2. 177.
[9] Genest 4. 20-1; Murphy, *Garrick* 1. 50-6.

be observed, gave a quite different turn to the satire from that intended in the play, which was originally directed against authors and dramas, rather than against players. Consequently many passages had to be interpolated for the sake of introducing well-known actors in their easily recognized speeches.

Although Bayes gave opportunity for considerable originality, Foote presently found a wider range for burlesque by composing his own pieces. On April 22, 1747, the following notice appeared in the *General Advertiser:*

> At the Theatre in the Hay-Market, this Day will be perform'd a Concert of Musick. With which will be given Gratis a New Entertainment, call'd 'The Diversions of the Morning.' The principal Parts to be perform'd by Mr. Foote, Mr. Shuter, Mr. Cushing, Mr. Castallo, Mrs. Hallam, Mr. Lee, Mr. Burton, Mr. Hallam, and Miss Moreau.
>
> To which will be added a Farce taken from 'The Old Batchelor,' call'd 'The Credulous Husband.'
>
> Fondlewife by Mr. Foote; Bellmour, Mr. Lee, Laetitia by Mrs. Hallam.
>
> With an Epilogue to be spoken by the B-d-d Coffee House.
>
> Tickets to be had at Mr. Waller's, Bookseller in Fleet-street.
>
> To begin at Seven o'Clock.

It will be clear at once that this device for evading the Licensing Act was not original with Foote: it was substantially the same as that which Giffard had employed as far back as 1740 at Goodman's Fields, and Macklin and Cibber at the Haymarket in the seasons of 1743-4 and 1744-5—the concert, the instruction of pupils, and their play. Even the title is reminiscent of Giffard's 'By Persons for their Diversion.'

Foote's troupe was so poor that he had to take all the important parts himself, shifting from one to another with Protean dexterity,[10] a practice which he never entirely relin-

[10] *Biog. Dramat.* 1. Pt. 1. 247.

quished. His company, indeed, notwithstanding certain telling actors whom he later brought out, like Weston and Shuter, never attained a reputation for ability. One thinks of them as Churchill characterized them,

> the legion which our summer Bayes,
> From alleys, here and there, contrived to raise.[11]

Everything was against Foote in the enterprise upon which he had embarked, except the single element of his own inherent power to please. The law was against him, his company was insignificant, the managers of the other houses unfavorable to his competition, the actors annoyed at his burlesques of themselves. Then too, he was infringing on their ground in presenting (under the title of the *Credulous Husband*) a selection from Congreve's *Old Bachelor,* one of the most popular comedies in their *répertoire.* This perhaps furnished the point of attack, although even such things as the *Diversions* were technically included in the Licensing Act, which enumerated 'interludes, tragedies, comedies, operas, plays, farces, or other entertainments of the stage.'[12] Interest was upon the side of the law, and it must have been no great surprise to Foote to see a company of constables arriving to close his doors. This happened on the twenty-third of April. The *Thespian Dictionary* (1802) is authority for the statement that it was done at the request of Mr. J. Lacey, then patentee of Drury Lane.

At this point opens that long career in which Foote successfully upheld his personal will against the will of other persons and of the law. Although his *Diversions* was stopped by the police on the twenty-third of April, it was again in full force on the twenty-fifth, and it had a steady run of thirty-six days.[13] In the autumn it was again acted 'by

[11] *Rosciad,* ll. 539-40.
[12] Nicholson, *Struggle for a Free Stage,* p. 86, n. 1.
[13] *Gen. Ad.,* Apr. 25 ff. June 6 announces 'the thirty-sixth day.'

Particular Desire' at the Haymarket[14] and then was carried over to Covent Garden for ten performances.[15] The *Credulous Husband,* however, had been discontinued after the first day; and for a considerable period no play from the regular *répertoire* of the patentees was presented at the Haymarket. But at Covent Garden Foote was again acting Fondlewife in that play before the year was over.[16]

Foote's piece was not, all this while, being advertised under its original title. The very next day after the posse of constables had closed his doors he had inserted the following paragraph in the *General Advertiser*—but not among the theatre notices:

> On Saturday Noon, exactly at Twelve o'Clock at the New Theatre in the Hay-Market, Mr. Foote begs the Favour of his Friends to come and drink a Dish of Chocolate with him, and 'tis hoped there will be a great deal of good Company, and some Joyous Spirits; he will endeavour to make the *Morning as Diverting* as possible.—Tickets for this Entertainment to be had at George's Coffee-House, Temple-bar, without which no Person will be admitted.—N. B. Sir Dilberry Diddle[17] will be there; and Lady Betty Frisk has absolutely promis'd.

When the time arrived, the curious were there in full force, some expecting to be served with a real cup of the steaming beverage; others, less literal-minded, thinking it might be a dialogue after the manner of tea-table talk. Presently Foote came forward and told them that, as he was training some young people for the stage, he would, with his friends' permission, while the chocolate was being prepared, proceed with his instructions. This was the last heard of chocolate.

The turn of the name was clever, but not difficult for a magistrate to fathom, particularly since there was no change

[14] *Ibid.* Nov. 2, 3, 4.
[15] *Ibid.* Nov. 9, ff.
[16] *Ibid.* Dec. 15, 1747.
[17] Cf. 'Sir Dilberry Diddle, Captain of Militia—an Excellent New Song.'

in the play. Nevertheless the constables did not return. Nor were Mr. Foote's 'friends' molested in the enjoyment of their metaphorical chocolate even after he had published the statement that it was to be paid for 'on coming in.' The preceding law-breakers had never been so bold as to take money at the doors. According to the *Biographia Dramatica* the opposition was withdrawn 'on account of the patronage of many of the principal nobility and others.' Thus were turned to account the friendships and the reputation for brilliancy that Foote had made in those first gay and reckless months in the fashionable circles of London.

On June the first, the *Advertiser* said:

> At the Request of several Persons, who are desirous of spending an Hour with Mr. Foote, but find the time inconvenient, instead of Chocolate in the Morning, Mr. Foote's Friends are desired to drink a Dish of Tea with him, at Half an Hour after Six in the Evening.

So Mr. Foote's *Tea* became common. In November and December he went over to Covent Garden and served it there, playing Fondlewife the while in the regular cast.

The next year he offered essentially the same entertainment under a new name. The hint for this had been taken from a popular foible, a craze for auctions. The advertisement reads:

> This Day, at his Auction Room late the little Theatre in the Haymarket, Mr. Foote will exhibit for the Satisfaction of the Curious a choice Collection of Pictures, all warranted Originals, and Entirely New.
>
> The Auction to begin exactly at Twelve. Catalogues will be delivered at the Place of Sale, which Ladies and Gentlemen are desired to pay for at going in, and it will be allowed them in any Purchase they may make.
>
> The Sale will continue every Day 'till all the Catalogues are sold.[18]

[18] *Gen. Ad.*, Apr. 15, 1748.

The auction was as popular as the tea. Day after day the notices were forthcoming,—on January 26, 1749, for example, 'the 54th Day's Sale'; and the performances continued steadily throughout the season. Foote had now made his place upon the stage; he was clearly a success.

CHAPTER III

Increasing Success. Macklin. Wilkinson. Murphy. Dr. Johnson. Faulkner.

In 1749 Foote inherited from one of his maternal relatives, a third fortune. 'As emblematical of the event,' says his biographer, he 'chose the following motto, *"Iterum, iterum, iterumque,"* ' set up a dashing equipage, and after dazzling his acquaintances in London, proceeded to the Continent.

During his absence he had no correspondence with any of his friends; and after a time wild reports came into circulation about him. Some said he had died of a fever resulting from dissipation; some, that he had been killed in a duel; others, that for an unidentified crime, he had been executed near Bordeaux. The fact was, he was merely staying in France to enjoy his fortune. When it was gone, he reappeared in London.

The first time he was seen upon the stage after this, with his characteristic lack of reticence, he spoke a prologue to his new play, 'wrote by Mr. Garrick,' which openly referred to the current reports. Among the various topics of popular interest, plays, elections, lotteries, the naturalization of the Jews, the Canning-Squires kidnapping trial, he says,

> Ev'n I sometimes am matter for debate:
> Whene'er my faults or follies are the question,
> Each draws his wit out and begins dissection.
> *Sir Peter Primrose,* smirking o'er his tea,
> Sinks, from himself and politics, to me.
> 'Paper! boy.' 'Here, sir, I am!' 'What news to-day?'
> 'Foote, sir, is advertised'—'What, run away?'
> 'No sir; he acts this week at Drury-lane.'
> 'How's that, (cries feeble *Grub,*) Foote come again?
> I thought that fool had done his devil's dance:
> Was he not hang'd, some months ago, in France?'

A man who was present informs us that this prologue 'gave very high entertainment to a splendid audience, on that night,

and several times since, both from the pleasantry of the speaker, and so delicate a piece of raillery on himself.'[1] It was encored every night.

The new play was the *Englishman in Paris,* which had been given for the first time six months before this (March 24, 1753) at Covent Garden for Charles Macklin's benefit. It was given again for his benefit on the twentieth of the following December at Drury Lane, when he took leave of the stage. At both performances Foote acted in the title rôle. On this occasion Macklin spoke an epilogue advertising his new business.

His project was to open a coffee-house where the arts and sciences were to be taken under his peculiar charge. He seems to have set up two of these coffee-houses, one near the theatre in Covent Garden and the other in Hart Street. At the latter, he again undertook a profession in which he had long been famous, the training of pupils in acting. He also lectured.

Foote said that Garrick wrote the epilogue for Macklin's farewell at Drury Lane because he was glad to be relieved of a formidable rival. And when some of the old man's associates expressed regret that so excellent an actor should be leaving the stage, he said they need not fear; that Macklin would first break in business and then break his word. This came true shortly—and in part, perhaps, through the agency of Samuel Foote.

Macklin's 'entertainment' in Hart Street was called the *British Inquisition.* 'Any Question, Lecture or Essay upon Trade, Morality, Literature, Arts or Sciences, or upon any Subject of public Utility or Entertainment will be thankfully received, and delivered to the Public from the Rostrum,' said his notice; 'or if any Gentleman or Lady is inclined to speak their own Production, the Inquisitor is at their Service.'[2]

[1] *Gent. Mag.* 23. 493.

[2] *Pub. Ad.,* Dec. 2, 1754. For Macklin's *Inquisition* see *ibid.* Nov. 27, ff. Also *Gent. Mag.* 24. 532.

Now Macklin had by no means the scholarship requisite for such an undertaking. Here lay danger. For—of all misfortunes, one of the worst—Samuel Foote took a liking to be present on these evenings. The temptation to be funny at whatever cost to others was one that Foote could never resist. Consequently at the 'Great Room in Hart Street,' as well as at the Bedford, where he lounged with other wits, he ridiculed Macklin unmercifully. The embarrassment he caused him is reflected in a note in the *Public Advertiser* of December 11, about a fortnight after this enterprise was begun:

> The Public may depend upon it, that the Inquisitor General of Great Britain will be ready publicly or privately to receive, or to return Mr. *Foote's* compliments.

Examples are recorded of Foote's behavior on these evenings: Macklin lectures on the causes of duelling in Ireland; he takes an historical survey and has arrived at the Elizabethan period. Foote rises, would like to speak.

"Well, sir, and what have you to say?' says Macklin.

He would merely like to offer a suggestion, as he believes he can settle the matter in a few words. 'What time is it?'

'What has that to do with the question, sir?'

'Everything; will you please to answer me, sir?'

Macklin looks at his watch. 'Half past ten.'

'Very well,' says Foote, 'about this time of the night every gentleman in Ireland who can possibly afford it, is in his third bottle of claret, and in a fair way of getting drunk; from drunkenness he proceeds to quarrelling, from quarrelling to duelling, and there's an end of the chapter.'

And there is an end of his friend's lecture; hot-headed Macklin is angry, claps his book shut, and dismisses his audience.[3]

Another time Macklin lecturing upon memory, boasts that he can repeat anything by rote after a single hearing. Foote, upon the instant, proposes that he repeat the following:

[3] See Cooke, *Macklin*, p. 208.

> So she went into the garden to cut a cabbage leaf, to make an apple pie; at the same time a great she-bear coming up the street, pops its head into the shop. 'What! no soap?' So he died, and she very imprudently married the barber; and there were present the Picninnies and the Joblielies, and the Garyulies, and the grand Panjandrum himself, and the little round button at top; and they all fell to playing the game of catch as catch can, till the gunpowder ran out at the heels of their boots.[4]

With such senseless rigmarole poor Macklin is caught again, and another lecture is spoiled.

Macklin's purpose was serious, but as he was somewhat heavy and his tormentor light and quick, the enterprise degenerated into a farce, with Foote and his like, rather than the rightful leader, the real centre of interest. Eventually patronage devolved mainly upon those who came to hear Foote heckle Macklin or sometimes to take a turn at doing the same.[5]

This was not all. Foote had again engaged the Haymarket and it now occurred to him to parody the *British Inquisition* on his own stage. And so he announced in the *Public Advertiser* of December 13, 1754:

> At the Little theatre in the Haymarket Monday next a Writ of Inquiry will be executed on the Inquisitor General
>
> By Mr. Foote
>
> The Members of the Robin-Hood are summoned to the Jury.

This was answered the next day as follows:

> At the request of most of the Wits, Witlings, Smarts, Laughers, Jokers, Critics, Sneerers, and other Choice Spirits of this Metropolis, on Monday next, At Mr. Macklin's Great-Room in Hart Street will come on before the Inquisitor General, the Trial of the egregious Sam. Smatter, alias Would-be, alias Mimic, alias Buffoon, alias Critt, alias Wit, alias Beau, alias fine Gentleman, and vulgarly called Esquire, for a public Cheat and Imposter.
>
> The whole Public are summoned to be on the Jury. . . .
>
> The Inquisitor.

[4] See Maria Edgeworth's *Harry and Lucy* 2. 152-3 (Hunter 1825).
[5] Cooke, *Foote* 1. 70.

Foote represented Macklin as contending for the dignity of the inquisitorial functions with Dr. Rock, a noted quack,[6] and a 'gingerbread merchant' famous as a dandy,[7] named Tiddy-Doll. One of the scenes in which Macklin is portrayed in the rôle of teacher has been described thus:

> 'Well, Sir,—did you ever hear of Aristophanes?'—'Yes, Sir,—a Greek dramatist, who wrote'—'Ay, but I have got twenty comedies in those drawers, worth his "Clouds" and stuff.—Do you know anything of Cicero?'—'A celebrated orator of Rome, who, in the polished and persuasive, is considered a master of his art.'—'Yes, yes; but I'll be bound he couldn't teach elocution!'—'Perhaps not, Sir.'—'Perhaps, then, you have heard of one Roscius, whom Cicero praised?'—'Certainly, Sir,—a very celebrated actor.'—'Stuff! he couldn't have played Shylock!'

This exhibition of Macklin was so much talked of that at last he could no longer resist the desire to see it himself. So he went to the Little Theatre and took an obscure seat. As the evening advanced the violent old man, not given to accepting insults, grew more and more excited. Foote brought the exhibition to a close with this charge to his 'pupil':

> 'Now, Sir, remember; I, Charles Macklin, tell you, there are no good plays among the ancients, and only one great one among the moderns, and that's the "Merchant of Venice"; and there's only one part in that, and only one man that can play it;—now, Sir, as you have been very attentive, I'll tell you an anecdote of that play: when a Royal Personage, who shall be nameless (but who doesn't live a hundred miles from Buckingham House) witnessed my performance of the Jew, he sent for me to his box, and remarked, "Sir, if I were not the Prince—ha—hum—you understand—I should wish to be Mr. Macklin!" Upon which I answered, "Royal Sir, being Mr. Macklin, I do not desire to be the —" '[8]

[6] Dr. Rock's advertisements may be read in *Pub. Ad.*, Dec. 18, 1754 ff.

[7] References to this personage may be met in D. Lyson's *Collectanea* 2.32 (a collection of newspaper clippings in British Museum).

[8] Bernard, *Retrospections of the Stage* 2. 122-4. He places this 'when Foote commenced his dramatic satires at the Haymarket' and 'Macklin was beginning to get popular as a teacher of elocution,'

When Foote reached this point, it was too much for Macklin. He leaned forward and shouted, 'I'll be d . . d if I did!' But there was some truth in the cruel caricature. Although he had a certain impressiveness, his vanity was extreme, and he talked too much of himself, his fame, and his admirers.

The feeling between these two friends, who had evaded the law together back in the '40's at the Haymarket and who had fraternized at Drury Lane only last year in the *Englishman in Paris,* grew high and the wit correspondingly low. Cooke states that Macklin brought an absurd charge against Foote of stealing a portmanteau; but this was perhaps figurative, like other hints in the notices.[9] A pamphlet entitled an *Epistle from Tully in the Shades, to Orator M——n in Covent Garden* was very sarcastic about Macklin's attempt to lay down the law on matters of which he knew little and contained unpleasant allusions to his early poverty and his moral character, with many an oblique glance of favor at his antagonist. *M—ckl—n's Answer to Tully,* while ostensibly replying to these criticisms, appears to be virtually a new attack upon him.

It is said[10] that in five evenings Foote realized £500 from his burlesque of Macklin, while Macklin himself was presently gazetted in the Bankruptcy Court. But his bankruptcy could not have been entirely due to Foote; it should be laid also to his expensive establishment and swindling employees.[11] After this unfortunate venture he returned to the stage and to many years of successes and quarrels. And as to Foote,

which would be in the period of the *Diversions* rather than the *Inquisition.* But since the excerpt is not included in Wilkinson's version of the former, I follow H. B. Baker (*Eng. Actors* 1. 190) in assigning it to the latter.

[9] For items on Foote and Macklin see *Pub. Ad.,* Dec. 17, 26, 27, 30, 1754; Jan. 1-6, 1755.

[10] Letter from Murphy to his brother, Apr. 1755, cited Forster, *Hist. and Biog. Essays* 2. 356.

[11] Cooke, *Macklin,* p. 210.

it was not long before he was again representing Macklin to the public in his *Tea.*

Foote was now attaining a notable popularity both as writer and actor. In February and March, 1756, for example, the newspapers show that his *Englishman in Paris* and its sequel, the *Englishman Returned,* and the *Knights* were on the boards at Covent Garden with Foote always in the cast. In this period an evening's performance ordinarily included at least two plays, and Foote at this date was acting in both his own and the other play of each evening. The same winter there were two performances of the *Englishman in Paris* at Drury Lane. In May both houses presented this play and Covent Garden offered also the *Knights* and *Taste,* with Foote in the cast. By the opening of the autumn he had gone to act the same character at Drury Lane that he had lately been acting at Covent Garden, where some one else was now playing his Englishman. During this engagement he produced a new comedy of his own, the *Author.*

The following April he left London in order to bring out his plays in Ireland. He was accompanied by a new actor, Tate Wilkinson, that 'mere, mere mimic's mimic,' as Churchill styled him.[12] Wilkinson's access to theatrical life, according to his own account,[13] was due to his appeal to Garrick's dislike of Foote, whom he had burlesqued when making application at Drury Lane shortly before this. Not long afterwards, as Garrick, Foote, and others were dining together, said Roscius to Aristophanes:

> 'Egad, Foote! there is a young fellow engaged with me, who I really think is superior to either of us at mimicry.—I used to think myself well at it, but I actually give him the preference: He has tried to resemble me, but that will not do; though Mrs. Garrick says, she is sure he will be like me.'
>
> 'Damn it!' says Foote, 'I should like to hear him.'[14]

[12] *Rosciad,* l. 414.
[13] Wilkinson, *Mem.* I. 126.
[14] *Ibid.* I. 147.

The upshot of this was that Foote made Wilkinson the offer of a place with him in his projected trip to Ireland. The form of the offer was typical of Foote's habitual insinuations against Garrick. He told Wilkinson that he had observed that Garrick thought him fit only for the hobby-horse in the *Rehearsal,* and that if he wished to be released from such tyranny, he, Foote, would be glad of his company to Ireland and would 'fix him' on 'genteel terms' with Mr. Sheridan, at the Smock Alley Theatre in Dublin.

The year following this engagement of Foote's at Smock Alley was that in which Woodward and Barry set up their ill-fated rival theatre in Crow Street. Their withdrawal from Drury Lane had left vacancies which Garrick filled with his two 'd..d exotics,' Foote and Wilkinson, who soon got him into trouble by mimicking all the most prominent performers of the other house. Foote made plenty of money this season; but however stalwart his purse, it always played the laggard to his extravagances. Early in 1759 he was in such straits that he decided to retrieve his fortunes in foreign parts. A trip to Scotland occurred to him, a thing which at that time had never been undertaken by a London star.

Callender, the Edinburgh manager, readily made terms with him, and he talked briskly with all his friends about his intended journey. But when the day of departure drew near, lo, what about carriage-hire and other travelling expenses? 'Damn it,' said Foote, 'I must solicit that hound Garrick,' and he posted off his 'dear Wilkinson' to ask for the loan of a hundred pounds. Garrick handed over the gold, as he did on more than one other occasion to Foote, who so far as I know, never lent him a penny. For some reason as soon as Foote got his friend's money into his hands he always began deriding him for something or other—usually stinginess. When he was possessed of the funds for his present project,

> It gave him such spirits [says Wilkinson] that all his cares were over, and it seemed a moot point with him, whether he should

> continue in London and spend the money, or undertake the journey in search for more; but for a wonder, prudence prevailed, and the chaise was ordered to be ready in the morning, and he accordingly set off for canny Edinburgh: On the evening he received the cash, he not only feasted with Mr. Garrick's money, but by way of returning thanks, told more ludicrous stories of him than at any other time I ever recollect. He ridiculed him much as a poet, and said 'David's verses were so bad, and (Garrick so fond of writing) that if he died first, he dreaded the thoughts of his composing his epitaph.'

On this evening Wilkinson requested Foote's promise to act at his benefit. Foote graciously complied and promised also his interest in behalf of his young friend's boxes, in recounting which Wilkinson concludes, 'I was yet to learn—that words are but wind—ships are but boards—and men are but men.'[15] For after a successful season in Edinburgh Foote was back in London in time to fulfill his promise, but when reminded of it, coolly refused not only to perform, but even to allow his *Diversions* to be used. Wilkinson, however, had in his possession a pirated copy, and Garrick—probably hoping to break up the connection between the two wags, who were always an anxiety to him—connived at the performance of it. After burlesquing Foote as Lady Pentweazle in *Taste,* Wilkinson proceeded to imitate him and Kitty Clive in their interpretations of the two main characters in the *Author,* Mr. and Mrs. Cadwallader. Shouts of applause attended this burlesque, which was rendered particularly effective by Wilkinson's appearing in the same costume Foote had worn as Cadwallader upon the same stage.

Foote was at this time on too bad terms with Garrick to hope for an engagement at Drury Lane; and Rich, for some reason, would not take him on at Covent Garden. He therefore undertook an independent venture, a comic lecture, which he gave at the Haymarket in December (1759). It was full of the sarcasms with which he always bristled, on or

[15] Wilkinson, *Mem.* 2. 72-8. See also p. 90.

off the stage. Garrick and Rich, as they themselves had foreseen, were the targets for the sharpest of these.

Garrick, in his nervousness, had sent Wilkinson posting off in all haste to get a good seat and hear everything. Wilkinson brought back the report that 'the lecture was rather defective and lame, but in that whimsical delivery and oratorical situation Foote was unrivalled, as he had great spirit, judgment, fire, and volubility, was very equal and collected in a situation so perilous and difficult.' The lecture was in two parts: the first went off well, but he had not made sufficient preparation for a whole evening and the second part fell entirely flat. He lost spirit and apparently could think of no resource but to read the new comedy which he was preparing, the *Minor*. Even this failed to redeem the evening; for although, as finally worked out, one of his most popular pieces, it was weak and unintelligible in its incomplete state. He concluded with an apology for the haste with which the entertainment had been prepared and promised considerable alterations and additions before the next time. But he did not repeat the entertainment.[16]

Shortly after this he left the city to fulfill a second engagement with Barry and Woodward in the Crow Street Theatre, Dublin. He was at the moment in more than usual disfavor with Garrick on account of the sarcasms he had launched against him in this lecture; and to undo him, Garrick proposed to give Wilkinson, who was under contract at Drury Lane, leave to repair to Dublin and heckle him by counter attacks from Smock Alley. And so at their respective theatres Foote and Wilkinson vied with each other through the character of Lady Pentweazle. Thus were the actors' quarrels of London carried to foreign soil.[17]

Foote boasted that he had nothing to fear from Wilkinson; but in his new comedy he gave disproportionate attention to

[16] For account of this lecture see Wilkinson, *Mem.* 2. 133-8.
[17] See Wilkinson, *Mem.* 2. 140 ff.; 165 ff.

developing a character intended to satirize him, and acted it himself in Wilkinson's voice and manner. He also—as was his habit—told all his acquaintances beforehand who was represented in this character and had the identification 'privately insinuated into the boxes and publicly circulated in the newspapers.' The character was Shift, who had risen from the gutter to become a link-boy about the theatres. Wilkinson was well known to come of good stock, and he could afford to laugh. His father, the Reverend John Wilkinson, had been his Majesty's chaplain of the Savoy, and his mother, daughter of an alderman in Carlisle, was something of an heiress. His early years were spent in a home of cultivation and luxury.

Wilkinson was never hampered by excessive delicacy. Before the *Minor* had been out a year, he was actually performing the part of Shift himself. Foote produced the play in Ireland on the twenty-eighth of January, 1760, and the English public first saw it under his management the following June. Less than two months afterwards, Wilkinson—then on one of his provincial tours—was already acting to full houses in Winchester[18] both Shift and the other parts that Foote himself took in the *Minor*. To him was due also the appearance of the play at Covent Garden simultaneously with the author's own production at Drury Lane the first winter after its original run at the summer theatre.

'Muster Williamskin,' said Rich to him one day—the manager of Covent Garden was never strong on names or on grammar—'you are much improved since I first began to larn you; I think I must engage you.—Name your terms.' Wilkinson proposed that his piece should be the *Minor* and Rich instantly agreed, though he knew nothing, he said, of 'Muster Footy's' farce. Then the adaptable mimic made up a long standing quarrel with Luke Sparks, who had never

[18] Wilkinson, *Mem.* 2. 231. For other performances see *ibid.* 3. 52, 68, 105, 114, 126, 144, 152, 240; *Wandering Patentee* 3. 37, 38.

forgiven his burlesque of him in Foote's *Diversions,* and the two went hand in glove to make a success of the *Minor* at Covent Garden, with the hope of outdoing its author at Drury Lane. Wilkinson took all Foote's parts, that where he appears in his own person in the introduction, and those of Mrs. Cole, Shift, and Smirk, for which he had carefully studied the author's interpretations at the one performance that had previously been given at Drury Lane. Foote, of course, got wind of the intended performance ahead of time. He posted over to Covent Garden and thundered out that if Rich allowed the *Minor* to be acted, he would produce him and his three cats and his 'hound of a mimic' all together 'next week at Drury Lane for the general diversion of the pit, boxes, and galleries.' Rich wished to withdraw the play, but was dissuaded. Hence the simultaneous London productions of November 24 and thereafter.[19]

In 1763 Wilkinson and Foote acted together[20] in the *Minor* at the Haymarket, Wilkinson as Shift and Squintum, Foote as Mrs. Cole and Smirk—a queer division, since Smirk is not a real character in the play but only an impersonation by Shift.

Thus were the two mimics each to each both bane and blessing.

The summer after Foote first played the *Minor* in London was notable for his making up an old quarrel with Arthur Murphy over his alleged theft from Murphy of the plot of the *Englishman Returned from Paris.* Finding it impossible to procure the Haymarket for the season, Foote prevailed upon Murphy, who was on good terms with Garrick, to apply for the rent of Drury Lane. This he did with success. Each of the two managers was to provide three new plays.

[19] Wilkinson, *Mem.* 3. 3-29.

[20] *Ibid.* 3. 152; see also 241. Wilkinson introduced imitations of other actors into his acting of Shift,—for instance, Garrick and Mrs. Bellamy (*Ibid.* 3. 76-7).

Murphy came forward with his three, *All in the Wrong,* the *Citizen,* and the *Old Maid;* but Foote furnished nothing except a prologue to the first of these.[21] When asked if he was not angry with Foote's neglect of his part, Murphy merely said, 'Of what use was it to be angry with him, when, within five minutes he would have laughed me into a good humor?'[22]

The next year was that of Foote's famous encounter with Dr. Samuel Johnson, whom he intended to introduce into his new play, the *Orators.* The satire was to be directed at the affair of the Cock Lane Ghost; and as Johnson was known to have thought her worthy of a serious investigation, which he had made in company with a great divine[23] and had then written up for the *Gentleman's Magazine,* he was to be represented as one of her dupes. In this scheme Foote perhaps meant to pay off an old score. Two or three years before this as Johnson, Burke, the two Wartons, Murphy, and others were having Christmas dinner at Garrick's, some one reported that Foote, who was then in Dublin, had been horsewhipped by an apothecary for burlesquing him. Garrick wondered that any one should show so much resentment to Foote, since he had a sort of license for such liberty.

'Nobody ever thought it worth his while to quarrel with him in London,' said he.

'I am glad,' said Johnson, 'to find that the man is rising in the world.'[24]

Foote heard of this slur upon himself, and afterwards of the Doctor's condescending to give his consideration to the flutterings in Cock Lane. In such cases Foote's reckoning was prompt. From one of these events he got the coin to

[21] Quoted in J. Foot's *Murphy,* p. 173. It was printed at the time in the *Pub. Ad.* (June 18, 1761). For the terms of this summer's business see Foot, pp. 171-81.

[22] *Ibid.,* p. 173.

[23] Dr. Douglas, later Bishop of Salisbury.

[24] *Monthly Rev.* 76. 374.

pay for the other: Johnson should appear with Fanny Phantom in the *Orators.*

Churchill had already published the first two books of his *Ghost,* where Johnson figures as Pomposo.

> Pomposo, Plausible, and I,
> With Fanny, have agreed, to try
> A deep concerted scheme—this night
> To fix or to destroy her quite.

Churchill had spoken of 'this great triumvirate' as

> Elected with a joint consent,
> All fools in town to represent.[25]

Johnson called Churchill a blockhead[26] and let it go at that. But he did not pass over so lightly the news that Foote had him scheduled for the Haymarket. Says Boswell:

> Being at dinner at Mr. Thomas Davies's the bookseller, from whom I had the story, he asked Mr. Davies 'what was the common price of an oak stick;' and being answered six-pence, 'Why then, Sir, (said he,) give me leave to send your servant to purchase me a shilling one. I'll have a double quantity; for I am told Foote means to *take me off,* as he calls it, and I am determined the fellow shall not do it with impunity.'[27]

Davies took pains to let Foote hear of this. It has been stated also that Johnson himself sent word to Foote that 'the theatre being intended for the reformation of vice, he would go from the boxes on the stage, and correct him before the audience.'[28] Foote relinquished the idea of introducing him.

Boswell once said to Johnson:

> 'Did he not think of exhibiting you, Sir?' JOHNSON. 'Sir, fear restrained him; he knew I would have broken his bones. I would have saved him the trouble of cutting off a leg; I would not have left him a leg to cut off.'[29]

[25] The *Ghost,* Bk. 2. 589 ff.
[26] Boswell 1. 485.
[27] *Ibid.* 2. 342.
[28] *Monthly Rev.* 76. 347.
[29] Boswell 2. 109.

But at Boswell's finding fault with Foote's habit of making fools of his visitors, Johnson replied:

> 'Why, Sir, when you go to see Foote, you do not go to see a saint: you go to see a man who will be entertained at your house, and then bring you on a publick stage; who will entertain you at his house, for the very purpose of bringing you on a publick stage. Sir, he does not make fools of his company; they whom he exposes are fools already: he only brings them into action.'[30]

The place he had intended for Johnson in the comedy of the *Orators* Foote filled with George Faulkner, the one-legged Dublin publisher, friend of Swift and Chesterfield.[31] Faulkner was so well known at this time in London that the *Orators* was principally supported by Foote's hobbling burlesque of him. Eventually at Chesterfield's suggestion[32] Faulkner sued Foote for this and won his case.

Still, Foote can not be said to have lost much in his tussle with Faulkner: the fine was of slight significance compared with the success of the *Orators*. Indeed, recalling the events of Foote's life up to this time, one has the impression that he never really lost anything. If he could not portray Johnson in the *Orators*, he rendered his audience equally hilarious over the substitution of the hobbling printer. If Wilkinson burlesqued his acting, he retaliated by putting him in a play and the play was popular. This chapter of his life bears out the prophecies one might have made after hearing the story of his first theatrical venture, the *Diversions of the Morning*.

[30] *Ibid.* 2. 113.

[31] Swift had taken up Faulkner's cause as far back as 1736, when he was committed to Newgate for printing a certain pamphlet by the Bishop of Kilmore. His twenty volume edition of Swift's works, which is the main source of succeeding commentators, was not published till 1772, but he had had many dealings with Swift. Samuel Richardson's *Address to the Public*, 1754, printed in *Sir Charles Grandison*, concluded a dispute with Faulkner which ran in the Dublin papers in Oct. and Nov., 1753.

[32] Chesterfield's *Letters* 3. 1277-8.

CHAPTER IV

Foote's Accident and the Beginning of his Career as Manager

The year 1766 was the turning-point in Foote's career. For nearly twenty years he had enjoyed an increasing popularity in society no less than upon the stage. Charles James Fox told Rogers that when Lord William Bentinck invited Foote to meet him and some others at dinner, they were all angry, but that one evening sufficed to win them completely.[1] Dr. Johnson, 'having no good opinion of the fellow,' was 'resolved not to be pleased' when he found him a guest at Fitzherbert's, but the resolve was no better carried out in his case than it was in the famous meeting with Wilkes. 'The dog was so comical' that he gave up his purpose to be disagreeable with him, and insisted afterwards that he was 'irresistible.'[2] Garrick, though he never liked him, said he was the most entertaining companion he had ever known. He was absolutely fearless in his witticisms, which 'seemed to please everybody by sparing nobody.'[3] Rank put not the least restraint upon his tongue. But he loved to associate with people who had it, and to exercise among them the privileges of the old-time court-fool. When he visited Paris there was a place for him at the *petits soupers* of Madame de Pompadour; and the King listened with delight to his mimicries of the courtiers.[4] At home 'he was visited by the first nobility, and he was sometimes honoured even by royal guests.'[5] At his town house in Suffolk Street and at his country place he dispensed a free and easy hospitality.

[1] *Recollections of the Table Talk of Samuel Rogers* (1856), p. 100.
[2] Boswell 3. 79-80.
[3] Davies, *Garrick* 2. 221.
[4] *Town and Country* 9. 600.
[5] *Gent. Mag.* 47. 536.

Among all his acquaintances, he was most at home in that dashing, devil-may-care circle presided over by his boon companion, Sir Francis Delaval. Early in the year 1766 he went with both the Delavals, the Duke of York (brother to George III), and others, for a visit at Lord Mexborough's seat, Methley, near Leeds. Now, Foote was a good boaster but a poor rider. And so it pleased these jovial friends of his to goad him on till he found himself riding the Duke's mettlesome horse. The conclusion of their little joke was an accident which the Duke's surgeon, though never so attentive, was not able to amend. Foote suffered a fracture of the leg in two places and had to submit to amputation.[6]

Chesterfield thereupon wrote George Faulkner that heaven had avenged him by punishing his adversary 'in the part offending'[7] and less brilliant persons contributed doggerel on the subject to the magazines. Now was the day for vengeful Methodists to write Hudibrastic verses inscribed to Peter Paragraph (the name by which Faulkner appears in the *Orators*), or for other writers to address satires to Sam F . . . . Esq. as from that same Peter; or for punsters to inquire,

> What Measure shouldst thou ever keep,
> Friend Sam! thy fate is such—
> A Foot too little now you are;
> Before a Foote too much.

Some expressed such opinions as the following:

> Tho' fractur'd his limb, and confin'd to his bed,
> Yet tremble, ye Scribblers! his wit is not dead;
> Provoke him no more—you'll repent it—look to't—
> For though with *one* leg, you will still find him *Foote*.[8]

This came near to the facts. Foote was scarcely past the operation when he observed, 'Now I shall take off George

[6] Feb. 3, 1766. *Gent. Mag.* 36. 100.
[7] *Letters* 3. 1338.
[8] See *London Chron.* 19. 160, 172; *Gent. Mag.* 36. 89.

Faulkner to the life.'[9] If there was a little lack of taste in his exploitation of his deformity, there was a superb courage in the way he set about making the best of it. A contemporary said that 'he often called himself Captain Timbertoe, and where a piece has seemed to languish and flag, I have seen him, by a hobbling walk across the stage, accompanied with significant gesture and grimace, set the house in a roar.'[10]

No more than four months had passed after the accident before this amazing man was actually playing his old parts and carrying on the work of manager at the Haymarket, which had delayed its opening two months for his return.[11] On the first date after this of which I have a report, he chose to act stout old rheumatic Mrs. Cole in his *Minor*. His very next character was Peter Paragraph (George Faulkner).

The Duke of York had the humanity to be troubled over Foote's misfortune, and he cast about for some favor he might do him. At the operation Foote had begged the doctor's indulgence because it was 'the first time of his performance in the character of a Pat*i*entee'[12]—a poor pun, but prophetic. For the favor the Duke now bestirred himself to get him was the royal patent for acting plays in London. This was granted July 5, 1766, and was good for Foote's life-time only.[13] It authorized him to produce 'plays and entertainments of the stage of all sorts,' between May fifteenth and September fifteenth, 'within the house commonly called or known by the name of the Little Theatre in the Haymarket, or within any other House or Theatre, built or to be built, where he the said Samuel Foote can best be fitted for that purpose within the City of Westminster, or within

[9] Genest 5. 113.
[10] *European Mag.* 25. 15.
[11] *Thespian Mag.* 2. 383.
[12] Cooke, *Foote* 1. 142.
[13] Cooke gives the original license (3. 202-8).

the liberties thereof.' Foote now purchased the Little Theatre, which he had been renting regularly during the summer months since 1762; and in 1767 he opened a practically new building there.

For the opening he produced an *Occasional Prelude,* the four characters in which were played by four of the best comic actors in London, Palmer, Weston, Charles Bannister, and Foote himself. There is no plot and not very much interest. It was printed in the *Monthly Mirror* (17. 44 ff. Title misprinted *Occasional Prologue*), and an extract was given in the *London Magazine* (36. 351-2) and reprinted in Holcroft's *Theatrical Recorder* (1. 288-91. In both misnamed). It is included in Badcock's edition of Foote's plays and in Cooke's *Memoirs.* The *London Magazine*[14] in reviewing the production, said, 'Mr. Foote himself, notwithstanding his late misfortune, possesses as much spirits, and gives as much satisfaction, as ever.' The writer adds, 'The improvements he has made in his house are prodigious.'

The most notable event of the first year at the newly furnished theatre was the production on July 2 of the mock-heroic *Tailors or Quadrupeds, a Tragedy for Warm Weather.* This is said to have been sent to Foote from Dodsley's bookshop by an unknown person who wrote that, if he liked it, he was at liberty to use it, and if not, he was requested to return it in the same secret manner in which he had received it. Foote's own name is found upon the title page of some editions. But in a letter to Wilkinson, whom he desired to engage for a part, he states, 'I have a piece of three acts NOT MY OWN, which I shall give in the month of May or June next, called *The Tailors.* The subject is a rich one—the dispute between the masters and the journeymen of that respectable profession—and I think the author has done it exquisite justice. It is a parody of the best passages in the most favourite plays, conveyed with great gravity in blank

[14] 36. 268.

verse.'[15] If the play were his, there seems no reason why he should have disavowed it. It was not his way to disavow clever pieces, and this was undeniably clever; nor had he ever the least fear of the animosity his satires might produce—he was more inclined to welcome it as advertisement. The subject was suggested by some recent disputes between the master-tailors and their journeymen which had aroused general interest. The play was, as its later history showed, capable of stirring up a riot, though on this occasion it did not do so. It caused a terrific riot at its revival by Dowton at the Haymarket on August 15, 1805.[16] It is excellent reading to-day, for the real burlesque is the literary one.[17]

The year 1767 was an anniversary for Foote. Just twenty years earlier, in 1747, on beginning his managerial career he had successfully faced the Licensing Act, the rival theatres, and a posse of constables. His device had been quite simple, the choosing of a new name for the offending play. In 1767, on beginning his managership of a patent theatre with himself as star performer, he has to face an extraordinary physical handicap for an actor, a wooden leg. His device is again

[15] Quoted *Biog. Dramat.* 4. 315.

[16] *Biog. Dramat.* 4. 315 ff. Thomas Holcroft's *Theatrical Recorder* 2. 206 ff.

[17] Further as to authorship: the style is not, except in a few details, much like Foote. Badcock, though not including it in his edition of the works, inclined to a belief in Foote's authorship on the ground of three instances of the exclamatory 'What!' so common in his writing. But the examples of this can certainly be paralleled in many other dramatists, and his much more characteristic 'Hey!' does not appear. On the other hand, Foote's peculiar use of the modifier *little* with a man's name (copied by Sheridan) is found a number of times. The negative evidence furnished by the lack of a dramatic prelude in the *Rehearsal* style seems to me even more significant. The *Diversions, Lindamira,* the *Inquisition,* the *Orators,* all give reason to expect a prelude in a play of this sort. Foote has one in the *Minor,* where there is less reason to expect the use of the device. The characters, too, are less clearly differentiated than usual in Foote. Clarence (*'The Stage' Cyclopaedia*) ascribes the play to Colman.

quite simple: he produces plays containing characters who limp. As we have seen, on returning to the theatre, he acted hobbling old Mrs. Cole and one-legged George Faulkner. The character which he chose for himself in the *Tailors* was Francisco, who is thus introduced:

> DOR. Francisco, stay! unkind Francisco, stay!
> Nor let thy Dorothea plead in vain;
> Consider, love, thy swaddled legs, thy gout,
> and all thy pains.
>
> FRAN. Cease, Dorothea, to perplex my breast
> With idle fears; whene'er my duty calls,
> Thou know'st, nor gout, nor rheumatism can
> stop me.

But the *répertoire* of lame characters is limited. Foote therefore set about creating some new ones. On the thirtieth of May, 1768, the first of them was introduced to the public. He was called the *Devil upon Two Sticks*.

In the spring of 1770 the papers were promising several fresh things by Foote, the *Lame Lover,* the *Gallant Sharper*—'a petite piece of one act,' not preserved, and not, after all, so far as I have found, acted—and *Drugger's Jubilee*.[18] This also was never acted. In May he opened the Haymarket with a good troupe—among them, Macklin, Sheridan, Gentleman, Dancer, Weston, Sparks, Mrs. Gardener, and Mrs. Jewell. The first production was enlivened by a prologue aimed at the Shakespeare pageant that had been showing at Drury Lane. This was reprinted and sharply criticised in a broadside, probably by Dr. Paul Hiffernan,[19] entitled *Foote's Prologue Detected; with a Mineature-Prose Epilogue of his Manner in Speaking It. By Philo-Technicus Miso-Mimides.* The same writer published also *Thoughts on the Cause of the Discontent in Foote's Prologue.*

[18] *Town and Country* 2. 230.
[19] See Lowe, *Bib. Eng. Theat. Lit.*, p. 131.

The great Shakespeare celebration at Stratford-upon-Avon[20] had taken place the previous summer. Foote had been there—according to newspaper gossip had 'paid nine guineas for six hours' sleep' and been 'charged two shillings for being told what o'clock it was.'[21] Although witty, he was not very gracious about the bedraggled effects of the rain and the mud, probably because the whole affair amounted in the main to a huge glorification of Garrick. On the cold, wet day appointed for the grand procession, Garrick said to him, as the two sat at breakfast while the rain poured down outside, 'Well, Sam, what do you think of this?' 'Think of it!' was his reply, 'why, as a Christian should do. I think it is God's revenge against vanity.'[22]

When the winter season came, Garrick had a success of ninety evenings at Drury Lane in the pageant which had been spoiled by the rain at Stratford.[23] Covent Garden, too, was making use of the material in 'a new comedy of three acts called Man and Wife, or the Stratford Jubilee.' The Haymarket should not be behind the other patent houses. Foote would write a play and call it *Drugger's Jubilee,* after Garrick in one of his famous Elizabethan rôles. Garrick should appear as Steward of the Jubilee, with wand, white-topped gloves, and the mulberry-tree medallion of Shakespeare which the corporation of Stratford had presented to him. Some ragamuffin in the procession should address him in the well-known lines of Whitehead, the poet-laureate,

> A nation's taste depends on you,
> Perhaps a nation's virtue too.

[20] *Town and Country* 1(2). 473-5 gives a full account of this. Garrick's *Ode* for the occasion reprinted 493-6. See also Davies' *Life of Garrick* 2. 217-32.

[21] *Pub. Ad.,* Sep. 14, 1769. *Town and Country* 1(2). 477 quotes Foote on the Jubilee.

[22] Cooke, *Foote* 2. 85-6.

[23] Full account of D. L. production, *Town and Country* 1(2). 548-50. See *Pub. Ad.,* Oct. 1769, for simultaneous productions of Stratford celebrations at D. L. and C. G.

At this Garrick should make no answer, but flap his arms and cry,

Cock-a-doodle-doo!

The plan of the burlesque seems to have been prompted by jealousy and also by a desire for revenge on Garrick for allowing a report to get about that Foote was under obligations to him for a loan of five hundred pounds.[24] There was no concealing Garrick's distress at the news of Foote's plan for a mock jubilee. Foote eventually was induced to relinquish it by a mutual friend, the Marquis of Stafford, who contrived that the two should meet as if by accident at his house.[25]

Foote's own troubles were lying heavy upon him these days. In his acting he must have felt his lameness sorely, for he was soon providing himself with a new play which again should attempt to conquer the difficulty by exploiting it. The play was the *Lame Lover*. If it were not so pathetic, it would be disgusting to hear him, in the person of his hero, bringing out his flat jokes upon a cork-leg; but there is, after all, something that claims one's respect in the courage with which he refused to be the victim of his fate.

In the fall of 1770 Foote went to Edinburgh for the winter season, carrying with him Sowden, Weston, and others of his own troupe.[26] He had taken a three-year lease of the Edinburgh theatre at five hundred guineas a year. But the peculiar humor of his plays and of his acting did not please the Scotch. So in the spring of 1771 he sold the remaining term of his lease[27] to West Digges and Bland, and shook the dust of Edinburgh from his feet. There is a story of an unsuccessful law-suit he had with Ross, the proprietor of the

[24] Cooke, *Foote* 1. 169 n. Also Davies, *Garrick* 2. 259-60.
[25] Cooke, *Foote* 1. 166-9.
[26] *Town and Country* 2. 480; *Private Correspondence of David Garrick* 1. 2; *Pub. Ad.*, Oct. 24, 1770.
[27] *Lloyd's Eve. Post.* 29. 215.

Edinburgh theatre. Ross's Scottish agent called on Foote in London with the bill of costs, and as Foote handed him the money, he remarked that he presumed Ross would be returning to Edinburgh, after the manner of his race, in the cheapest way. 'Ay, ay,' replied the Scot, tapping the pocket in which Foote's money now reposed, 'I shall travel on foot.' 'I am heartily sorry for that,' said Foote, 'for I know no man who more richly deserves horsing.'[28]

Five years had now passed since the events narrated at the opening of this chapter, years as full of enterprise as any that had preceded them. Foote seems like a hero of romance. He was confronted by physical disaster, by the hatred of his victims, the jealousy of rivals,

> Yet nothing did he dread, but ever was ydrad.

However, Nemesis was awaiting him.

[28] Tregellas, *Cornish Worthies* 1. 327; Cooke, *Foote* 2. 215.

CHAPTER V

Quarrel with the Duchess of Kingston. End of Foote's Life

Foote had never the least touch of the chivalrous about him: he would as lief strike a man when he was down as at any other time, and a woman as a man. Yet in his long career of personal abuse, he met only one victim who returned him as good as he gave and as roughly, only one who went so far as to force a play of his from the stage without the satisfaction of a single performance. This person was Elizabeth Chudleigh, Countess of Bristol, and sometime Duchess of Kingston.

In her youth Elizabeth Chudleigh, maid of honor to Augusta, Princess of Wales, had secretly married the Hon. Augustus John Hervey, retaining for practical reasons her maiden name and her court employment. She was very beautiful, but coarse and vulgar. The costume which she wore as Iphigenia at a masked ball in 1749[1] was so notorious that Foote's allusion to it in the play he wrote about her nearly a quarter of a century afterwards was not obscure. Her amours were famous. In 1759 her long ignored husband seeming likely to fall heir through the approaching death of his brother to the earldom of Bristol, Miss Chudleigh took means that would enable her later, in case she should so desire, to establish the fact of her marriage. This, however, was the last thing in the world she ever did desire: the establishing of it in 1776 was her final undoing. For in the meantime, while her husband was waiting for the title that would make her a countess, she fell in with a chance to become a duchess by marrying Evelyn Pierrepont, Duke of Kingston, with whom she had been living for some eight years. About this time Hervey, who wished to marry some one else, sent her word that he intended to apply for a divorce.

[1] Walpole's *Letters* 2. 371-2; *Letters of Mrs. Elizabeth Montagu* 3. 158.

Unwilling to acknowledge her marriage, she brought suit of jactitation against him and was declared by the court to be a spinster. Silence was enjoined on Hervey. Upon this, she married the Duke of Kingston and was presented to the King and Queen, who on a great occasion wore her favors, as did the officers of state. The Duke died in 1773, and her display of mourning was the subject of much ridicule. Shortly after this she visited Rome and was received with marked favor by Pope Clement XIV. During her absence Evelyn Medows, Kingston's nephew, caused her to be indicted for bigamy. Hervey about this time became Earl of Bristol. She returned to England in May, 1775, appeared before Lord Mansfield to answer the indictment against her, and entered into a recognizance to stand trial by her peers in Parliament. Walpole, as usual, neatly forecast the outcome: 'Her Countess-hood will save her Duchess-hood from being burnt in the hand.'[2] She was convicted, but not punished.[3] It was while this trial was in progress that she came into collision with Samuel Foote, for she learned that she was to be the drawing card in his new play, the *Trip to Calais*.

The substance of this play is as follows: Jenny Minniken has run off with her father's apprentice, Dick Drugget, to Calais, where she means to marry him before her father can get a chance to unite her to the respectable fishmonger for whom he intends her. There has not been time for the ceremony when appear on the scene Jenny's father, mother, aunt, and unwelcome suitor. Dick hurriedly spirits her off to a convent. Her relatives, with the aid of an Irish priest, find her here, but are unable to get possession of her. In thinking over possible assistance to be found in Calais, they hit upon the idea of applying to Lady Kitty Crocodile, an Englishwoman whom Jenny's aunt, a milliner, has met in London.

[2] *Letters* 9. 227.

[3] For reports of her trial see *Universal Mag.* 58. 212-15, 251-3; *Town and Country* 8. 171-9 and 374-6; *Gent. Mag.* 45. 252, 347, 602, 605; *Westminster Mag.* 4. 369-71.

'I believe her ladyship will be very willing to serve us,' says this Mrs. Clack.

'I don't doubt it at all,' replies O'Donovan, the priest, 'she is one of the most worthiest women alive. She couldn't bear to stay in England after the death of her husband; everything there put her so much in mind of her loss.'

They call upon her. She has living with her a young relative whom she treats in public with the tenderest consideration and in private with brutality. This girl, Miss Lydell, is beloved by Col. Crosby, whom Lady Kitty would like to secure for herself. There is an elaborate scene showing Lady Kitty's hypocricies, with allusions to facts known about the Duchess of Kingston. The conferences with the Pope, of which much had been made, are brought in, with the ugly innuendoes that had not waited to be first hinted by Foote's coarse pen. Lady Kitty is shocked at Mrs. Clack's mention of a second marriage; but she is not averse to mentioning the Continental princes who have been at her feet. Mrs. Clack, who is something of a Mrs. Malaprop in her way, compliments her with the observation that 'everybody has not the gift of incontinence, like to my lady.'

By her ladyship's influence Jenny is brought from the convent and the following conversation takes place:

> L. Kitty. There are, my dear, two men who solicit your hand; one favoured by you, the other your father approves.
>
> Jen. My situation exactly.
>
> L. Kitty. Suppose, then, by way of reconciling all parties, you were to marry 'em both.
>
> Jen. The happiest thought in the world! I wonder it never came into my head: but I am afraid, my lady, we have not dignity enough to do such a thing as this, without danger.

Since Col. Crosby has carried off Miss Lydell, her ladyship proposes supplying her place with Jenny. 'One of my maids of honour is returning to England; I shall have no objection to promoting Mrs. Clack's niece to her place,' she says. There was a double allusion in this, for not only was the

Duchess a retired maid of honor, but also it was one of her eccentricities to use this term for the upper servants of her own establishment. The play ends with Jenny's going into service.

The character of Miss Lydell is apparently drawn from a Miss Penrose, a protégé of the Duchess, who eventually quitted her service because of ill treatment.[4] It may have been from her that Foote obtained many intimate details. The name of Lady Kitty Crocodile is, of course, in ridicule of the Duchess's tears for the Duke's death. Foote must once have thought of calling her Lady Betty Bigamy, for he impersonated such a character of his own on the occasion of Henderson's first call upon him.[5] Lady Barbara Blubber was apparently another contemplated name.[6] The title and scene of the play were suggested by the fact that her Grace had recently returned from Calais.

The comedy was advertised in the spring of 1775 as the coming attraction at the Haymarket. 'Notwithstanding Mr. Foote has hitherto performed to very numerous andiences,' said *Town and Country* in the May issue, the month that the Duchess of Kingston first appeared before Lord Mansfield in connection with her indictment for bigamy, 'he does not propose being remiss in producing some new performances, which will speedily make their appearance. The first, we hear, is a comedy, in which some well-known characters will be highly pourtrayed; and the ground-work of the piece is to be the *denouement* of a certain *Double Marriage,* that has lately made so much noise in the polite world, and among the lawyers.'

It has been maintained that Foote's purpose in writing this play was to get blackmail out of the Duchess. But the

[4] *Life and Memoirs of Elizabeth Chudleigh* (1789) cited C. E. Pearce, the *Amazing Duchess* 2. 161.

[5] Davies, a *Genuine Narrative of the Life and Theatrical Transactions of Mr. John Henderson,* pp. 14-20.

[6] Pearce, *op. cit.* 2. 158.

imputation is hardly justified, since the comedy if acted would easily have brought him a good sum and the cutting it out of his season's programme crippled his theatre for a whole summer.[7] Garrick, who knew him too well to be mistaken, wrote Colman (June 25, 1775), 'Foote was in great spirits but bitter against the Lord Chamberlain. He will bully them into a license. The Duchess has had him in her closet and offered to bribe him; but Cato himself, though he had one more leg than our friend, was not more stoically virtuous than he has been.'

When her Grace had learned what was in store at the Haymarket, she had immediately applied through her friend the Duke of Newcastle to the Lord Chamberlain, Hertford, to have the play suppressed. 'Have you heard the history of Foote and her Grace of Kingston?' wrote Walpole. 'She applied to the Lord Chamberlain, and prevented the piece being licensed, though Foote had an audience, and with his usual modesty assured her he had not had her Grace in view. The dame, as if he had been a member of Parliament, offered to buy him off. Aristophanes's Grecian virtue was not to be corrupted; but he offered to read the piece, and blot out whatever passages she would mark, that she thought applicable to her case. She was too cunning to bite at this; and they parted. He swears he will not only print his comedy, but act her in Lady Brumpton.[8] He has already printed his letter to Lord Hertford.'[9] Foote is also reported to have said that the play when published should be dedicated to her ladyship.

His letter to Hertford, which was widely copied by the press, is as follows:

> *My Lord,*
>
> I *did* intend troubling your Lordship with an earlier address; but the day after I received your prohibitory mandate, I had the

[7] See, for example, *Town and Country* 7. 427.
[8] The hypocritical widow in Steele's *Funeral.*
[9] *Letters* 9. 228-9. See also *Westminster Mag.* 3. 341.

honour of a visit from Lord Mountstuart, to whose interposition I find I am indebted for your first commands, relative to *The Trip to Calais,* by Mr. Chetwynd; and your final rejection of it, by Colonel Keen.

Lord Mountstuart has, I presume, told your Lordship, that he read with me those scenes to which your Lordship objected; that he found them collected from general nature, and applicable to none but those who, through consciousness, were compelled to self-application. To such minds, my Lord, *The Whole Duty of Man,* next to the sacred writings, is the severest satire that ever was written; and to the same mark if Comedy directs not her aim, her arrows are shot in the air; for by what touches no man, no man will be amended.

Lord Mountstuart desired that I would suffer him to take the play with him, and let him leave it with the Duchess of Kingston. He had my consent, my Lord; and at the same time an assurance, that I was willing to make any alteration that her Grace would suggest. Her Grace saw the play; and in consequence, I had an interview with her Grace. With the result of that interview I shall not at this time trouble your Lordship. It may, perhaps, be necessary to observe, that her Grace could not discern (which your Lordship, I dare say, will readily believe) a single trait in the character of *Lady Kitty Crocodile* that resembled herself.

After this representation, your Lordship will, I doubt not, permit me to enjoy the fruits of my labour; nor will you think it reasonable, that because a capricious individual has taken it into her head that I have pinned her ruffle awry, I should be punished by a poniard struck deep in my heart. Your Lordship has too much candour and justice to be the means of giving so violent and ill-directed a blow.

Your Lordship's determination is not only of the greatest importance to me now, but must inevitably decide my fate for the future; as, after this defeat, it will be impossible for me to muster up courage enough to face Folly again. Between the Muse and the Magistrate there is a natural confederacy: what the last cannot punish, the first often corrects: but when she not only finds herself deserted by her ancient ally, but sees him armed in the defence of her foe, she has nothing left but a speedy retreat.

In that case, adieu, my Lord, to the stage! *Valeat res ludicra!*—to which I hope I may with justice add, *Plaudite!*—as, during my continuance in the service of the public, I never profited by flattering their passions, or falling in with their humours. Upon all occasions I have exerted my little powers (as indeed I thought it my duty) in exposing follies, how much soever the favourites

of the day; and pernicious prejudices, however protected and popular. This, my Lord, has been done (if those may be believed who have the best right to know) sometimes with success. Let me add, too, that in doing this I never lost my credit with the public: because they knew I proceeded upon principle; that I disdained either being the echo, or the instrument of any man, however exalted his station; and that I never received reward, or protection, from any other hands than their own.

I have the honour to be, &c.

Sam. Foote.

It was currently reported that Foote told the Duchess 'he would consent to suppress the publication of the scenes if her Grace would give him Two Thousand Pounds for the copy.'[10] The following affidavit was published in the *London Chronicle,* August 17-19:

MIDDLESEX and *WESTMINSTER* to wit.

The Rev. Mr. John Forster, A.M., Chaplain to her Grace the Duchess of Kingston, maketh oath, that in the month of July last, he waited on Mr. Samuel Foote, at his house at North-End—by the direction of her Grace the Duchess of Kingston, to return to the said Mr. Foote, a manuscript Comedy entitled, a *'Trip to Calais,'* which he, the said Mr. Foote, had left with her Grace for her perusal, which he did accordingly deliver to him. That at this time he took an opportunity to dissuade Mr. Foote from publishing the said Comedy, which he was informed it was his intention to do, as it might very much disoblige the Duchess of Kingston, and make in her a powerful enemy, who was capable of being a very valuable friend; and that on these considerations he advised the said Mr. Foote to make a compliment of the copy of this piece to her Grace the Duchess of Kingston, especially as the public performance of it had been prohibited by the Lord Chamberlain; that the said Mr. Samuel Foote replied, that unless the Duchess of Kingston would give him Two Thousand Pounds, he would publish the *'Trip to Calais,'* with a preface and dedication to her Grace; and that the said Mr. Foote commissioned him to communicate these his intentions to her Grace the Duchess of Kingston.

JOHN FORSTER.

Sworn before me, this eighteenth day of August, 1775.

J. FIELDING.

[10] *London Chron.* 38. 159.

Foote's correspondence with the Duchess of Kingston was printed in the *Evening Post* and then copied in many other papers and magazines.[11] The first letter was as follows:

Madam,

A *member* of the privy council, and a friend of your Grace's (he has begged me not to mention his name, but I suppose your Grace will easily guess him), has just left me. He has explained to me (what I did not conceive), that the publication of the scenes in *The Trip to Calais* at this juncture, with the dedication and preface, might be of infinite ill consequence to your affairs.

I really, Madam, wish you no ill, and should be sorry to do you an injury. I therefore give up that consideration, which neither *your Grace's offers,* nor the threats of your agents, could obtain. The scenes shall not be published; nor shall anything appear at my Theatre, or from me, that can hurt you, *provided* the attacks made on me in the newspapers do not make it necessary for me to act in defence of myself. Your Grace will therefore see the necessity of giving proper directions.

I have the honour to be, &c.

Sam. Foote.

North-end.
Sunday, August 13, 1775.

Her Grace returned an immediate answer:

Sir,

I *was* at dinner when I received your ill-judged letter. As there is little consideration required, I shall sacrifice a few moments to answer it.

A member of *your* privy council can never hope to be of a Lady's cabinet. I know too well what is due to my own dignity, to enter into a compromise with an extortionable assassin of private reputation. If I before abhorred you for your slander, I now despise you for your concessions. It is a proof of the illiberality of your satire, when you can publish, or suppress it as best suits the needy convenience of your purse. You first had the cowardly baseness to draw the sword; and if I sheathe it until I make you crouch like the subservient vassal you are,

[11] E. g., *London Chron.* 38. 120, 159 f., 168; *Monthly Mag.* 51. 532; *Town and Country* 7. 412-15; *Gent. Mag.* 45. 390-2; *Universal Mag.* 57. 96-9. They are all given in Cooke 1. 200-10.

then is there not spirit in an injured woman, nor meanness in a slanderous buffoon.

To a man, my sex alone would have screened me from attack; but I am writing to the descendant of a Merry Andrew, and prostitute the term of manhood by applying it to Mr. Foote.

Clothed in my innocence as in a coat of mail, I am proof against a host of foes; and, conscious of never having intentionally offended a single individual, I doubt not that a brave and generous public will protect me from the malevolence of a theatrical assassin. You shall have cause to remember, that though I would have given liberally for the relief of your necessities, I scorn to be bullied into a purchase of your silence.

There is something however in your *pity* at which my nature revolts. To make an offer of pity, at once betrays your insolence and your vanity. I will keep the *pity* you send, until the morning before you are turned off: when I will return it by a Cupid with a box of lip-salve; and a choir of choristers shall chaunt a stave to your *requiem.*

E. Kingston.

Kingston House
Sunday, 13th August.

P. S. You would have received this sooner, but the servant has been a long time writing it.

Foote replied:

Madam,

Though I have neither time nor inclination to answer the illiberal attacks of your agents, yet a public correspondence with your Grace is too great an honour for me to decline.

I cannot help thinking that it would have been prudent in your Grace to have answered my letter *before dinner,* or at least postponed it to the cool hour of the morning: you would then have found that I had voluntarily granted the request which you had endeavoured by so many different ways to obtain.

Lord Mountstuart (for whose amiable qualities I have the highest respect, and whose name your agents very unnecessarily produced to the public) must recollect, that when I had the honour to meet him at Kingston-house by your Grace's appointment, instead of begging relief from your charity, *I rejected your splendid offers* to suppress *The Trip to Calais,* with the contempt they deserved. Indeed, Madam, the humanity of my royal and

benevolent master, and the public protection, have placed me much above the reach of your bounty.

But why, Madam, put on your *coat of mail* against me? I have no hostile intentions. Folly, not vice, is the game I pursue. In those scenes which you so unaccountably apply to yourself, you must observe there is not the slightest hint at the little incidents of your life which have excited the *curiosity* of the grand inquest for the county of Middlesex. I am happy however, Madam, to hear that your robe of innocence is in such perfect repair: I was afraid it might be a little the worse for wearing. May it hold out to keep your Grace warm the next winter.

The progenitors your Grace has done me the honour to give me, are, I presume, merely metaphorical persons; and to be considered as the authors of my muse, and not of my manhood. A Merry Andrew and a prostitute are no bad poetical parents, especially for a writer of plays: the first to give the humour and mirth; the last to furnish the graces and powers of attraction. Prostitutes, and players too, must live by pleasing the public; not but your Grace may have heard of ladies who by *private practice* have accumulated great fortunes.

If you mean that I really owe my birth to that pleasant connection, your Grace is grossly deceived. My father was, in truth, a very useful magistrate, and respectable country gentleman, as the whole county of Cornwall will tell you: my mother, the daughter of Sir Edward Goodere, baronet, who represented the county of Hereford. Her fortune was large, and her morals irreproachable till your Grace condescended to stain them. She was upwards of fourscore years old when she died; and, what will surprise your Grace, *was never married but once* in her life.

I am obliged to your Grace for your intended present 'on the day' (as you *politely* express it) 'when I am to be turned off.' But where will your Grace get the *Cupid* to bring me the lip-salve? That family, I am afraid, has long quitted *your* service.

Pray, Madam, is not J . . . n the name of your *female* confidential secretary? And is not *she* generally clothed in black petticoats made of your weeds?

'So mourned the dame of Ephesus her love!'

I fancy your Grace took the hint when you last resided at Rome. You heard then, I suppose, of a certain pope; and in humble imitation, have converted a *pious parson* into a *chamber-maid.*

> The scheme is new in this country; and has, doubtless, its particular pleasures. That you may *never want the benefit of the clergy* in every emergence, is the sincere wish of
>
> Your Grace's most devoted,
> Most obliged humble servant,
>
> *Sam. Foote.*

The person referred to in this letter as 'J . . . n' was a renegade Irish clergyman named Jackson, who was then residing for the most part at Kingston House and acting as a sort of secretary to the Duchess. He was at the time editor of a daily paper, the *Public Ledger*.

When Foote threw humanity to the winds that he might raise a season's laughter in the Haymarket at a woman already desperate, he did not realize the significance of his act. If the prohibition should fail to be removed from his play, he even considered having distributed between Hyde Park corner and Kingston House a broadside 'setting forth the birth, parentage, education, and exaltation of *Lady Kitty Crocodile:* who, from a private station, first became an attendant upon a great lady at court, afterwards married an admiral in the British fleet, was the favourite sultana of several crowned heads abroad; and lastly, married a most noble and illustrious duke, by whom she became possessed of a large fortune, great rank, high connections, &c. &c.'[12] From this his friends fortunately dissuaded him. But for what he had already done, Elizabeth Chudleigh had no mind to leave him in impunity; and she was a woman who would stoop as low as her antagonist. She apparently turned over the whole matter to her above-mentioned adviser, Jackson. From the beginning of the reports of the plan for the *Trip to Calais,* obscure innuendoes relative to Foote's private character, began appearing in Jackson's organ, the *Public Ledger,* and other newspapers.

[12] Cooke, *Foote* I. 211.

But Foote went doggedly on. When he was assured that there was no hope of reversing the prohibition of the *Trip to Calais,* he set about working the materials over into another play, which he produced the next summer under the title of the *Capuchin.* The satire is transferred from the Duchess of Kingston to Jackson, who is called Viper. Many of the scenes are the same, but the character of Lady Kitty is omitted. Jackson is thus introduced:

> TROM. Some littel time past, ve vas have anoder gentleman of de same kind in dis town; he vas a *grand* autere; *diable,* a man of great deal of vit, *beaucoup d'esprit.*
>
> JEN. Ay!
>
> TROM. Oh, *oui!* he vas write de pretty paragraph in de gazette, vat you call your newspaper; by gar, he lay about him like *le diable.*

The supposed friar, O'Donovan, meeting Viper, recognizes him as a former London pal of his own. Viper denies the acquaintance until finally cornered by details, which conclude thus:

> Then you became doer of the Scandalous Chronicle; mowed down reputations like muck; pushed yourself into the pay of lady Deborah Dripping, produced anonymous paragraphs against her of your own composition, and got paid by her for not putting them into your paper.

When their mutual recognition is at last settled the two priests set out together to seduce Jenny Minniken and at the same time to get money from all the persons connected with her.

After this play appeared, Jackson had his own quarrel with Foote as well as his employer's. His revenge was terrible. It undoubtedly shortened Foote's life. The innuendoes which had been circulated before now took definite shape in a report that a charge was about to be preferred in a judicial form against him for an attempt to commit a very odious assault. Public opinion held that the Duchess of

Kingston must be backing Jackson in these anonymous accusations. Some persons whom Foote had previously made his enemies now formed a sort of coalition with Jackson to compass his downfall.[13]

For the first time in his life Foote was at a loss as to what to do; he hardly felt that he could appear in public. But his friends encouraged him, and he opened his theatre with the *Bankrupt*,[14] a satire on scandal in the press. He also addressed the audience in a speech characterized by manly dignity and sincerity.[15] Not long afterwards he was actually tried on the vile charge.[16] He was acquitted, but the experience broke his spirit. From this time his health began to decline and his famous charm was gone. He now thought of retiring from the active life of manager. 'During the course of this month,' said *Town and Country*, in November, 'the chief dramatic topics (*sic*) of conversation have been, Mr. Foote's disposal of his patent of the Theatre Royal in the Haymarket, to Mr. Colman.'

By the terms of this transaction, executed January 16, 1777,[17] George Colman the Elder received all the Haymarket properties, and Foote's engagement to give him the refusal of whatever new pieces he should write, and to act on no other stage in London except the Haymarket. Foote was to receive a clear annuity of £1600 per annum and a handsome sum for Colman's right of acting all his unpublished works. It was generally said that Foote had sold his patent; but this he could not do, as its term was to expire with his own life. George Colman the Younger states[18] that his father and he after him 'opened the House by annual License of the

[13] A pamphlet entitled *Sodom and Onan*, 1776, dedicated to Foote, probably belongs to Jackson's campaign against him.

[14] *Westminster Mag.* 4. 264, *London Chron.* 39. 488.

[15] Quoted in various reports of the evening's performance.

[16] *London Chron.* 40. 32, 39, 558; *Town and Country* 8. 692-6; etc.

[17] *Gent. Mag.* 47. 44.

[18] *Random Records* 1. 229-35.

Lord Chamberlain. There has been,' he says, 'no patent for a Summer Theatre in London since Foote's death.'

The Haymarket opened the following May under Colman's management, with Foote as star performer. But there was nothing of his accustomed dash. In June he suffered a paralytic stroke while upon the stage.[19] He seems according to the *Public Advertiser* to have acted, however, in the *Maid of Bath* and the *Mayor of Garratt* on the thirtieth of July, and he was advertised to act in the *Devil upon Two Sticks* on the sixth of August, but apparently did not do so. When autumn came he was advised to try the effects of a winter in southern France, and he left home with that intention. His death, which in the general belief was hastened by the circumstances resulting from his altercation with the Duchess of Kingston,[20] occurred on the twenty-first of October, 1777, at the Ship Inn, Dover,[21] where he was waiting to cross over to Calais. He was buried in the West Cloister, Westminster Abbey.[22] He left no legitimate issue, and it is doubtful whether he was ever married. There were two natural sons, one of whom survived him.

[19] *Town and Country* 9. 293.

[20] *Town and Country* 9. 507-9. An anonymous writer in the *European Mag.* (25. 16) maintains that his death was caused by an overdose of laudanum, probably by design.

[21] *Gent. Mag.* 47. 508.

[22] *N. and Q.* 10 s. XI. 17, and 56 citing J. L. Chester, the *Marriage, Baptismal, and Burial Registers in the Collegiate Church or Abbey of St. Peter, Westminster,* p. 424, and Dean Stanley, *Historical Memorials of Westminster Abbey,* p. 305.

PART II

HISTORY OF THE PLAYS

CHAPTER I

THE *Diversions of the Morning* AND ITS SEQUELS *(Chocolate, Tea,* AN *Auction of Pictures, Taste, Tragedy à la Mode)*

Foote's first dramatic work appeared successively under various names, the *Diversions of the Morning,* a *Cup of Chocolate,* a *Cup of Tea,* and an *Auction of Pictures.* The manner of its original presentation has been recounted. Its subject-matter and its further history are now to be considered.

Only parts of this early work are extant, and those not the parts that drew forth most comment at the time. What people talked about was the satire on individuals. Not all of these can now be identified. Prominent among those of whom there are records were the actors already burlesqued by Foote when he was Bayes in the *Rehearsal.*

When the actors complained that by making a travesty of their acting he was taking away their livelihood, he answered that he would provide new situations for them. He then added more burlesques in which each was assigned to a business better adapted to his or her abilities, he said, than murdering blank verse and assuming the character of a lord or lady. How different he was from Garrick, who, on receiving a remonstrance for his mimicries as Bayes, desisted never to resume them! Foote did not stop even at physical deformities. He represented Delane, for example, who had lost an eye, as a blind beggar, and Ryan, whose voice was harsh

because of a deformity, as a razor-grinder. Quin was a watchman because of his deep tones and weighty manner. Peg Woffington appeared as an orange girl at the theatre, partly because the lovely Peggy was, in truth, very shrill, and partly, perhaps, because her mother had been a real orange woman on the Dublin streets. As for Woodward, since there was nothing to caricature in his acting, Foote touched upon his character, repeating in his manner Sir Fopling Flutter's speech, 'Wherever I go, there goes a gentleman; and when you have said a *gentleman*'—here he dropped Woodward's manner, 'why, you have said *more than is true*.' Garrick, though a greater actor, was easier game. His hesitation, particularly in death scenes, was already notorious, and Foote impersonated him in one from Lothario, a rôle in which he was very popular.[1]

Retaliation was not long in coming. When Woodward's benefit took place at Drury Lane,[2] this was in the notice:

> By particular desire Woodward will present his very good friend the Auctioneer with Tit for Tat, or one Dish of his own Chocolate.

This was a poetical address beginning:

> Call'd forth to battle, see poor I appear,
> To try one fall with this fam'd auctioneer.[3]
>
> . . .
>
> Harry to Sammy shall, and front to front.[4]

Woodward's *Tit for Tat* was repeated many times. Before a month had passed, it was *Tit for Tat with Additions*. And

[1] Cooke, *Foote* 1. 52 f., Wilkinson, *Mem.* 1. 24-6.

[2] Genest 4. 268.

[3] Quoted *Biog. Dramat.* 2. 168, *Gent. Mag.* 47. 534. The latter advertised *Tit for Tat* in its book list of Oct. 1754.

[4] Cf. *I Henry IV.* 1. 122. The old play-house copies read, 'Harry to Harry shall *and* horse to horse' for '*hot* horse to horse.' Genest 10. 454.

later, after Foote had produced his 'Brace of Cats from Italy,' in which he satirized the Italian opera, the *General Advertiser* announced:

> As the Auctioneer gives Tea tomorrow at the Theatre Royal in Covent Garden; Mr. Woodward, (by particular Desire) on Saturday next will present him with a Dish of his own Chocolate; with an Addition of one Mew at his Cats.[5]

Foote's reply was in his notice of April 8, the 'cats' being, in fact, withdrawn as not practicable:

> As the *Italian Cats* would not do for the Haymarket, Mr. Foote has dispos'd of them to Drury Lane.

It was added that,

> The Company may depend upon having an Additional Treat of Chocolate, but vastly different both in *Colour* and *Flavour* from that lately distributed by Harry the Smuggler.

At the *Auction* Foote advertised

> A Portrait of Harry the Smuggler.

Behind the scenes this gay banter was bitter animosity. Woodward prepared to 'dress at' Foote in the revival of a play of Otway's at Drury Lane and Foote was as angry as if he himself had never considered it fun to dress at other actors, or agreeable to feel his pockets bulging with coin thoughtless people had paid him for doing it. Hot in his haste, he sent off the following letter to Garrick, who was now manager of Drury Lane:

> SIR,
>
> IT is impossible for me to conceal a piece of intelligence that I have received this minute from either a friend or an enemy.
>
> I am told, that on the revival of a comedy called 'Friendship in Fashion,' a very contemptible friend of yours is to appear in the character of Malagene, habited like your humble servant. Now, I think it is pretty evident that I have as few apprehensions from

[5] Apr. 6, 1749.

the passive wit of Mr. Garrick, as the active humour and imitation of Mr. Woodward; but as we are to be in a state of nature, I do conceive that I have a plan for a short farce that will be wormwood to some, entertaining to many, and very beneficial to, Sir,

Yours,

SAMUEL FOOTE.

If your boxkeeper for the future returns my name, he will cheat you of a sum not very contemptible to you, viz. five shillings.[6]

Garrick answered that he would not set his wit against Foote's, for he was incapable of engaging with him at his usual weapons, but that he thought Foote unwise in calling Woodward contemptible, since he found him his own antagonist. And he wondered, he said, how Foote could take it ill that Woodward should continue a 'mimical war' first declared by himself.[7]

Foote was most at home in the Haymarket. When he served an occasional 'dish' of Tea at one of the other theatres, he omitted the satire on the actors, for there was a sufficient programme of personal burlesques without them. Most of the burlesques were of men whose very names are long since buried. There was, for instance, the epilogue 'by the B..d..d Coffee House,' in which he utilized observations drawn in those early days when he himself was making his mark as one of the wits at the Bedford. Then, there was a certain Dr. Lawson. There was nothing worse about the man than that his appearance and conversation were odd; for this he *diverted* Foote's guests at *Tea.*

One can fancy spectators who liked this sort of thing going often during a single season; for Foote's clever wit contrived frequent changes. The advertisement would call attention to 'a new character' or 'a new desert' to be offered at the *Tea,* or 'some originals by a new master' at the *Auction.*[8]

[6] *Private Correspondence of David Garrick* 1. 54.
[7] *Ibid.* 1. 55-6.
[8] *Gen. Ad.,* May 13, 1747; May 12; May 17.

The '50th Day's Sale,' for example, was advertised to exhibit 'some entire new Lots, consisting of a Poet, a Beau, a Frenchman, a Miser, a Taylor, a Sot, two Young Gentlemen, and a Ghost; Two of which are Originals, the rest Copies from the best Masters. And an Oration in Praise of Sight.'[9]

The oration imitated a certain quack oculist who called himself the Chevalier Taylor. He was the man who was declared by Churchill to be

> As well prepared, beyond all doubt,
> To put eyes in, as put them out,[10]

and who was regarded by Dr. Johnson as a fine instance of how far impudence will carry ignorance.[11] He was the author of a book with the following title-page, *History of the Travels and Adventures of the Chevalier* John Taylor, *Ophthalmiater; Pontifical-Imperial and Royal—The Kings of* Poland, Denmark, Sweden, *The Electors of the Holy Empire—The Princes of* Saxegotha, Mecklenberg, Anspach, Brunswick, Parme, Modena, Zerbst, Loraine, Saxony, Hesse Cassel, Holstein, Salsborg, Baviere, Liege, Bareith, Georgia, *&c. Pr. in Opt. C. of* Rom. *M.D.-C.D.—Author of 45 Works in different languages: the produce of upwards of thirty Years, of the greatest Practice in the Cure of distempered Eyes, of any in the Age we live—Who has been in every Court, Kingdom, Province, State, City, and Town of the least Consideration in all* Europe, *without exception. Written by Himself. Introduced by an humble Appeal, of the Author to the Sovereigns of* Europe. *Addressed to his only Son.* Before applying his treatments, the Chevalier was wont to indulge in bombastic orations couched in what he called 'the true Ciceronian, prodigiously difficult and never attempted by any man in our language before.' The sentences in this prodigious style all began with the genitive

[9] *Ibid.* Jan. 7, 1749.
[10] The *Ghost,* Bk. 4. 204-6.
[11] Boswell 3. 443.

case and concluded with the verb.[12] Such a man seems fair game, especially if it be true, as represented in the memoir published under the name of his son, that he was not only ridiculous but deliberately fraudulent. Foote was not the only person who satirized him: he was the subject of the *Operator: a Ballad Opera* (1740) and of the *English Impostor Detected, or the Life and Fumigation of the Renoun'd Mr. J . . . T . . .* (Dublin 1732). In Hogarth's *Consultation of Physicians* he appears leering at Mrs. Mapp, the bone-setter.

Another equally notorious charlatan was 'Orator Henley,' whose portrait also was drawn by Hogarth, in a picture entitled the *Christening of the Child*. He is also the subject of another piece ascribed to Hogarth, but said by Nichols[13] to be spurious, the *Oratory*. Both of these have satirical verses on Henley inscribed upon them. Pope pictured him in the *Dunciad*[14] and Fielding referred to him in the last line of the *Author's Farce*. He was the author of an historical poem, of a grammar of ten languages, of translations from ancient and modern authors, of works on theology, oratory, and literary criticism; and of certain political articles in a short-lived periodical called the *Hyp Doctor*,[15] for which it is alleged he was paid by Walpole. He was also a clergyman of the Church of England and founder of a new sect named 'the Oratory.' In 1747 he had engaged with Foote on the stage of the Haymarket Theatre, displaying remarkable proficiency in low buffoonery.[16]

[12] J. Nichols, *Lit. Anec.* 8. 400-1.

[13] J. Nichols, *Biographical Anecdotes of William Hogarth*, pp. 429-31.

[14] *Dunciad*, Bk. 2. 2, Bk. 3. 199-212.

[15] Isaac Ratcliffe of Elbow Lane, Alexander Ratcliffe, Jonadab Swift, Byan Bayonet are pseudonyms he used in this publication. It ran in opposition to the *Craftsman*.

[16] *Love at First Sight*, a collection of comic advertisements in the British Museum, contains a reference to this by Henley (p. 216).

Another portrait at the *Auction* was that of Christopher Cock,[17] himself a popular auctioneer. He had already been burlesqued by Fielding in the *Historical Register*. Fielding changed the gender of the name, calling him Christopher Hen, and assigned the part to Cibber's daughter, Mrs. Charke.

From Foote neither the quick nor the dead were safe. One of the latter was Sir Thomas de Veil, Justice of the Peace for Westminster, who had died[18] more than a year prior to the first of Foote's *Auctions*. Foote's burlesque of him was referred to in the following racy bit of writing in Fielding's organ, the *Jacobite Journal* of April 30, 1748:

> *Proceedings at the Court of Criticism, Thursday, April 28.*
>
> *Samuel Fut,* of the Parish of St. *Giles's,* Labourer, was indicted for that he being a person of an evil Mind and Conversation, and not having the Fear of either Law or Gospel before his Eyes, but being moved and seduced by the Devil, or some of his Imps, on the 18th of *April,* and at divers other Times at a Place called and known by the name of the *Scandal-Shop,* in the *Haymarket,* one Justice of the Peace, one Orator, one Poet, one Lord, one Auctioneer, and divers other Persons, did steal and take off, with a certain instrument, called a Hatchet-Face, value three-halfpence, which he the said Samuel Fut, before a certain Wooden Head, then and there did wear, and hold, them the said Justice of the Peace &c. in a certain Part called the Character, then and there wickedly, diabolically, and ridiculously, did maul and hack; and other injuries to them did against the Peace, &c. . . . . [The prisoner denied the charge, but was, at last, pronounced guilty.]
>
> His Council then moved in Arrest of Judgment.

See also Nichols, *Lit. Anec.* 8. 484. On Henley in general see a *Guide to the Oratory; or an Historical Account of the new Sect of the Henleyarians* (no date); *Oratory Transactions to be occasionally published by J. Henley, M. A.* (1728); *Gent. Mag.* 16. 666; 18. 572.

[17] Cooke, *Foote* 1. 56.

[18] Oct. 7, 1746. (*Gent. Mag.* 16. 558.) See also *Memoirs of the Life and Times of Sir Thomas Deveil, Knight, one of his Majesty's Justices of the Peace, for the counties of Middlesex, Essex, Surry, and Hertfordshire, the City and Liberty of Westminster,* etc.

1. That the Prisoner . . . was liable to the Censure of Higher Courts of Justice, and consequently could not be try'd here.

2. That some of the Persons mimicked were dead, and could not be sensible of any Injury done to their Characters. That Part of the Indictment therefore was Vicious, and if Part, the Whole.

To the first of these it was answered, that this Court had a concurrent Jurisdiction, to be exercised at their Discretion: And if the Government are at present too busily employed in Matters of greater Moment, to attend to such Offences, and to give them due Punishment, it becomes more necessary for this Court to exercise the concurrent Jurisdiction. . . .

To the second: That if any of the Persons mimicked were dead, the Offence was thereby heightened rather than extenuated; since to drag Persons out of their Grave, in order to ridicule them, could be only justifiable, in the case of notorious Criminals, whereas, on the contrary, one of these was a young Nobleman of great Honour, and the other a Magistrate, to whose Care the Public were highly indebted, for having brought many notorious Rogues to Justice; many, perhaps, of the Prisoner's intimate Acquaintance; and had he been now alive, the Prisoner, through his Means, would certainly have shared the same Fate.

One may believe this article was written not so much to defend the honor of dead justices or living orators as to strike a blow at a brother mimic. For of the 'divers other persons' whose reputations had been hacked was one Henry Fielding, who not long previously had led the prime minister of his country a-dancing across that same Haymarket stage.[19] And, in fact, he had also mimicked one of the very men whom he now commiserated on account of Foote's caricatures. Foote, on his side, had done Fielding no honor in the portrait he had drawn of him.[20]

We have a great many fragmentary bits of information

[19] Sir Robert Walpole in *Pasquin* and the *Historical Register.*

[20] See a squib directed at Fielding in *Old England,* June 25, 1748, signed 'Argus *Centoculi.*'

Pub. Ad., April 21, 1748, and following dates advertises some performances which may possibly have reference to Foote and Fielding.

about this first work of Foote's, but there is no coherent whole. Not only are the identifications of the persons burlesqued incomplete, but the play itself was never published entire. Part of it was worked over into a two-act comedy, which appeared in 1752 under the title *Taste*. This is accessible in the published works. The plot is exceedingly slight: in Act I Lady Pentweazle, middle aged and fatuous, sits for her portrait to Carmine, whose main business is painting spurious old masters for sale by his friend Puff, dealer in antiques; in Act II Lord Dupe and Novice are deceived into making purchases from these spurious wares, and the imposters, disguised as art critics, are discovered and exposed by Lady Pentweazle. Since the dupes prefer to part with their cash rather than with their reputations as judges of art, Puff and Carmine escape.

Garrick wrote and spoke a prologue for the first production of *Taste*.[21] But the play was not a success, probably because the subject was one rather for connoisseurs than for the general public.[22] Its failure caused the insertion of the following notice in the *Advertiser* of January 13:

> As the Entertainment call'd *Taste,* was not quite so well receiv'd as was expected, and as it was solely intended for the benefit of Mr. *Worsdale,* the Author has suspended its Representation till Worsdale's Benefit Night; by that time, some Alterations will be made, which it is hop'd, will render the Piece more Palatable to the Publick.

The play was produced, as announced, for Worsdale's benefit, January 21, but I find no account of changes. If there were any, they did not retrieve it. It appeared only five times that season. Yet it was by no means dead. It was acted in various other years. The part of Lady Pentweazle became one of Wilkinson's favorites when he gave *Tea* on

[21] Printed in the *Universal Mag.* 10. 33; also by Cooke, *Foote* 1. 63-4. On this prologue see Wilkinson's *Actor's Tablet,* p. 170.

[22] See *London Mag.* 21. 33-4; also a review of the play when published, *Monthly Rev.* 6. 77.

his provincial tours. The very last year that Foote was on the stage he acted Lady Pentweazle at his own theatre in the presence of King George III and Queen Charlotte and delighted her Majesty particularly with his satire upon the extravagant head-dresses which women were then wearing. His head-dress on this occasion was 'at least a yard wide,' and as he waddled off the stage 'the whole fabric of feathers, hair, and wool, dropped off.'[23]

A certain nineteenth century journalist[24] who dislikes Foote (because he attacked the press) thinks this was his one creditable piece of work. He says that—aided by the Queen's example—he made more headway against this foible than Addison and Steele and the newspapers had ever succeeded in making. A colossal service to society surely! But somewhat gratuitous, since as coiffures had already nine years before this become so large as to make a woman's head 'a full fourth of her whole body,'[25] fickle Fashion must have been about ready to make a change on her own initiative.

Taste was undertaken, the author says in the preface, 'to serve a man who had ever great merit with his friends, and to whom on the score of some late transactions, I think the public vastly indebted.' This was 'Jemmy Worsdale.'[26] He was probably the 'R. Smythe' employed in Pope's strange scheme of luring Curll to publish his correspondence. History says little that supports Foote's opinion of Worsdale. In early life he had been a servant to Sir Godfrey Kneller. He had proceeded to an apprenticeship in the great artist's studio, then to a run-away match with his master's niece, and,

[23] *Rec. Rev.* 2. 456. See also *Pub. Ad.*, Aug. 16, 1776.

[24] Grant, the *Newspaper Press* 1. 208-10.

[25] See *Pub. Ad.*, Oct. 19, 1767. Samuel Rogers in his *Recollections* recalls going to Ranelagh in his youth in a coach with a lady 'who was obliged to sit upon a stool placed in the bottom of the coach, the height of her head-dress not allowing her to occupy the regular seat.'

[26] On Worsdale see *Anecdotes of Painting in England with some Account of the Principal Artists, collected by the late Mr. George*

after that, to a summary dismissal. In later years he asserted that he was a natural son to Sir Godfrey. He also claimed the authorship of various songs, plays, and operas which according to Laetitia Pilkington were mostly written by her and other persons of less means and more brains than Jemmy Worsdale. As between the two, Worsdale's word is probably as good as Mrs. Pilkington's, but that is saying nothing. Vertue states in his *Anecdotes of Painting* that the man's notoriety was attained by his 'shameless mountebank lies.' He had considerable patronage as a portrait painter; but at this date, seems to have been employed on the boards at Drury Lane. When Foote brought out *Taste* there for him, Worsdale played the part of Lady Pentweazle.

Badcock says in his edition of Foote's works that the first act of *Taste* was almost identical with the unpublished first act of the *Diversions* and the *Biographia Dramatica* states that the first act of the *Diversions* 'was compiled from his comedy of *Taste.*' Both of these statements seem to me doubtful, because none of the accounts of the early productions of the *Diversions* mentions any of the characters or plot items. The idea of the auction, on the other hand, which is found in the second act of *Taste,* was introduced into the *Diversions* at a fairly early date. In later years, the *Diversions* certainly did incorporate material from the first act of *Taste.*

There are extant two alleged second acts to the *Diversions.* That performed at Drury Lane in 1758-9 may be found in Cooke's *Memoirs of Foote* (3. 113-29), in Badcock's edition of Foote (1. lvii-lxv), and in Tate Wilkinson's *Wandering Patentee* (4. 237-56). The substance of this act has no connection with the story in *Taste;* there are not even any of the same characters. It consists solely of a rehearsal scene,

Vertue; digested and published from his original MSS. by the Honourable Horace Walpole 4. 102. Also *Biog. Dramat.* 2. 146, Genest 3. 448; Laetitia Pilkington's *Memoirs* 1. 155 ff., 168, 249 ff.; 2. 279 ff., 346 ff.; 3. 37 ff., 47, 48, 89, 264 ff.

where, in the presence of two spectators (like those in Buckingham's play) a stage director trains his pupils in acting and receives a call from a man who offers him a drama.

The other second act of the *Diversions, Tragedy à la Mode; or, Lindamira in Tears* is printed in the *Wandering Patentee* 1. 285-298, as acted at the Haymarket in 1763. It is sometimes referred to as an additional act to *Taste. Modern Tragedy* is apparently another name for the same piece.[27] Like the other, it is disconnected with any preceding or following act. It is based on William Whitehead's *Fatal Constancy or Love in Tears, a Sketch of a Tragedy in the Heroic Style.* Foote has appropriated the heroine's name, Lindamira, the general burlesque idea, and a number of lines. He keeps the *Rehearsal* form, used in his earlier second act, and the manager and critics, who are not in Whitehead. The tragedy rehearsed is called *Love till Death.* In the original performance all its characters except Golcondus, the hero, which Wilkinson acted, were taken by pasteboard puppets. Foote himself was Fustian, the author.

One can hardly leave the consideration of this first play of Foote's without a little attention to Tate Wilkinson's report of some of the things he and Foote did with it.

Before their presentation of *Tea* in Dublin on their initial trip there together in 1757 Foote had sent Wilkinson a copy with instructions to prepare the part of Bounce, one of the 'pupils'; but as the time was short he allowed him, instead, to appear merely in his own person and speak whatever speeches he might choose from plays he knew. Wilkinson delivered a speech of Capulet's in the manner of a London actor named Luke Sparks. Most of the audience were familiar with London players. Someone cried 'Sparks of

[27] See Genest 5. 60, stating that *Tragedy à la Mode* came out Apr. 6, 1761 (D.L.), and the announcement of the same performance in the *Pub Ad.,* where the name *Modern Tragedy* is used. See also *Pub. Ad.,* March 16. Genest refers to *Modern Tragedy,* 4. 611 and 615.

London! Sparks of London!' Applause resounded as others, too, recognized the original. Then he gave them their favorite Barry as Alexander and as Macbeth, and Peg Woffington as Lady Macbeth. There sat Foote on the stage: what so piquant as to add him to the list! On the instant he repeated a dozen lines of the very prologue Foote himself 'had spoke' that same evening for his comedy of the *Author,* and which, since he had been speaking it every night, the audience knew by heart. Foote, like Garrick and most people who make a point of mimicking others, had a notion that he himself could not be burlesqued. And so, though he affected to be well satisfied with Wilkinson's little entertainment, he said he thought the imitation of himself the poorest of the lot. But as he got the money for the performance, Wilkinson remarks he 'pocketed the affront.'[28]

The next year (1758) Garrick engaged Foote and Wilkinson to serve *Tea* at Drury Lane. Sparks, Barry, Thomas Sheridan, and Mrs. Woffington were in Wilkinson's programme. But even before the first night arrived, alarm had begun to spread among the intended victims. Colonel Caesar, at that time supposed to be secretly married to Mrs. Woffington, hurried to Garrick with a remonstrance in her behalf, which her old admirer could not well refuse. He called in Foote and Wilkinson and ordered that the latter should 'take no liberty with any line, speech, or manner relative to Mrs. Woffington,' or presume even to 'occasion any surmise of likeness.' Foote gave bail for Wilkinson's good faith in this.

When the evening came,[29] the house was crowded, for Foote had blazed forth Wilkinson's merit to all his numerous aquaintances. First there was the scene similar to the one in Dublin already described, only that now Wilkinson acted

[28] *Mem.* 1. 171-8.

[29] Oct. 17, 1758. On this evening's performance see Wilkinson, *Mem.* 2, 11.

from Foote's copy under the name of Bounce. Foote was again Puzzle, the manager. After a fling at Thomas Sheridan's lectures on oratory, Foote assumed the manner of Macklin in the instruction of actors, and criticised 'a rant in Othello.' After this he produced some actors doing their parts as puppets, in ridicule of a type of 'show' then very popular. Then followed imitations by Wilkinson of Foote and Kitty Clive in Mr. and Mrs. Cadwallader, from Foote's *Author*. After this, there was the mock burletta (not preserved), and with a parting fling at the performances of Sadler's Wells and Islington, this farce came to a conclusion.

Wilkinson had been required to avoid any suggestion of a likeness to Mrs. Woffington, but he had dealt mighty blows at others of the Covent Garden troupe. Sparks was the first actor by whose manner Wilkinson had made a hit that initial night in Dublin, and now when he mimicked him again in London, the victim repaired to the manager of Drury Lane with bitter complaint.

'Why now hey, Sparks!' said Garrick, 'why now, hey, this is so strange now, hey, a—why Wilkinson, and be d. . . d to him, they tell me he takes me off, and he takes Foote off, and so, why you see that you are in very good company.' But when Sparks was gone, Garrick sent for Wilkinson and informed him that if he took any more liberties with any one from Covent Garden Theatre, he would fine him the penalty of his article, which was three hundred pounds; and he told Foote that there must be no more Wilkinson except in the part of Bounce. 'If indeed now—if Wilkinson could have taken me off, as Mrs. Garrick says, why now as to that I should have liked it vastly, and so would Mrs. Garrick,' he concluded. Foote assented.

When the evening arrived, though Wilkinson went on the stage intending to keep his word and act only Bounce, the demands from the house for his burlesques of the Covent Garden actors were so insistent that both Garrick and Foote gave him permission to perform them. He concluded with

impersonations of Garrick himself and also of Foote, which were received with vociferous applause. After this the other performers decided to let him die a natural death. The farce had a fine run, which pleased Foote for pecuniary reasons and he pronounced Wilkinson vastly clever.[30]

The above is substantially Wilkinson's own account of the *Diversions* as performed at Drury Lane in the autumn of 1758. In the rôle of manager Foote seems to have imitated Theophilus Cibber[31] as well as Macklin.[32] A contemporary reviewer[33] speaks of Woodward as one of the persons burlesqued. This writer says that Foote's 'instruction of his pupils was very justly hissed,' but that his acting of Lady Pentweazle was inimitable. 'However, I can't help saying,' he concludes, 'whatever those *Diversions* might be in a *Morning,* in an *Evening* they are, in my opinion, mighty indifferent.' The old name had been kept and was, of course, inappropriate.

Foote and Wilkinson were sometimes close confederates in this robbery of other men's repose, again sworn enemies, and the *Diversions* was often the cause of contention between them. But with or without Foote's favor, Wilkinson managed to make many a hearty meal from the tea. He served it with his own 'waiters'[34] at many places in England when he was manager of provincial theatres and leader of strolling companies, and he often burlesqued Foote himself.

[30] For the story of this performance see Wilkinson, *Mem.* 2. 25-40.
[31] *Lloyd's Eve. Post* 3. 386.
[32] Wilkinson, *The Wandering Patentee.*
[33] *Lloyd's* cited n. 31, above.
[34] Cf. early notices of *Tea,* where this term is used for the actors.

CHAPTER II

The Beginnings of Regular Comedy

The *Knights*, the *Englishman in Paris*, the *Englishman Returned from Paris*, the *Green-Room Squabble*, the *Author*

The *Diversions*, formless and ever changing, can scarcely be accorded the name of drama. Foote's first real comedy with a plot is the *Knights*. From the original advertisement one would almost suppose it to be still another addition to the *Tea:*

> In the Haymarket, On Monday next, April 3, Mr. Foote's Breakfasting will begin. All the Materials Fresh Imported. And the Company to be waited on by *Two Knights* from the Land's End; and a Brace of Cats from Italy.[1]

A later notice added,

> The Ladies and Gentlemen are desired to leave their *Lap Dogs* and *Spaniels* at Home because of the *Cats*.

The cat-duet, satirizing the Italian opera, was performed by Shuter and a man called for his skill in mimicking these animals, 'Cat Harris.'[2] Foote soon withdrew this foolish tag to the evening's entertainment. It was no real part of the *Knights*. Doran asserts nevertheless, that it 'did really constitute fair satire against the Italians.'[3]

The plot of the *Knights* is as follows: Hartop, heavily in debt to Sir Penurious Trifle, plans with the assistance of his friend Jenkins to settle his affairs by marrying the old gentleman's somewhat unattractive daughter, Miss Sukey, whom

[1] *Gen. Ad.*, Mch. 28, 1749.

[2] See Davies, *Dramatic Miscellanies* 1. 212-13 for an anecdote about Harris in this rôle.

[3] *Annals* 2. 375.

he has seen but once. But it appears that she is sought also by Sir Gregory Gazette for his son Tim; and father and son now present themselves at the inn where Hartop and Jenkins happen to be *en route* to the knight's estate. Sir Gregory is a country politician with a passion for news. Jenkins gives him to understand that Hartop is in all the mysteries of government and the knight, overjoyed, writes down all his fictions as rare information. Hartop learns from Tim that notwithstanding his parents' intentions with regard to Miss Sukey, his own eye is set on his uncle's milkmaid. In order to prevent Tim's marriage to Sukey, a plan is set afoot by Hartop and Jenkins to marry him to the landlord's daughter, Jenny, disguised as the heiress. Hartop impersonates Sir Penurious. But just as these affairs are taking shape, the real Miss Sukey and her aunt are seen to approach. The only safety for the young scapegraces lies in making a clean breast of their deception to Sir Gregory. 'Wonderful,' exclaims that guileless gentleman, 'good now, who could have thought it, cousin Hartop, lack-a-day.' It now transpires that while negotiations were pending, young Tim (thirty-two years of age) has run off and married his Mally. Hartop's impudence now rises to the height of asking Sir Gregory's permission to impersonate Tim and thus pay his addresses to Miss Sukey, saying that if he could impose on *him* when impersonating Sir Penurious, he will surely find less difficulty in deceiving his brother knight. Sir Gregory, too befuddled to see how he is being further played upon, readily consents even to the lending of garments. The ladies enter, and Hartop actually gets himself married to Sukey just before Tim happens to reveal to his father that, as far as his own marriage is concerned, Hartop had known about it all along and Jenkins had made the arrangements with the parson.

Sir Penurious Trifle never appears upon the stage except in Hartop's impersonation of him, yet he is clearly intended as a main figure. His character, implied in his name, is as

broadly drawn as Sir Gregory's. Besides his penuriousness he has another foible, an inordinate fondness for stories, which he narrates at interminable length. This is the character (in Hartop's impersonation) that Foote himself acted.

The two knights and Tim are taken from life. When Foote published the play, he boasted of this fact. 'The three principal characters,' he says in the preface, 'I met with in a summer's expedition; they are neither vamped from antiquated plays, pilfered from French farces, nor the baseless beings of the poet's brain. I have given them in their plain natural habit; they wanted no dramatic finishing.' Who they were it is not now possible to learn beyond the fact that they were from the West of England,[4] which may be guessed from the text.

Foote's next dramatic venture was the play that he prepared for Macklin's intended retirement from the stage in 1753, the *Englishman in Paris.* It was written with the express intention of giving opportunity for the display of his daughter's talents.[5] Miss Macklin was the idol of her father, who had spared no expense in her education. She was proficient in Italian, French, music, drawing, singing, dancing, the *belles lettres;* at the age of eighteen she was regarded as 'one of the most accomplished women in England.'[6] The three chief parts in the play were acted by members of the Macklin family,—Macklin presenting Buck; Miss Macklin, Lucinda; Mrs. Macklin, Mrs. Subtle.

Lucinda, an English orphan in Paris, is to be swindled out of her patrimony by her rascally guardians, Mr. and Mrs. Subtle. Their plan is to marry her to Buck, a boorish lad, lately arrived from England for the completion of his education. In order to do this they undertake to make him presentable by means of barber and tailor, on whom in passing, they

[4] Cooke, *Foote* 1. 58.
[5] Wilkinson, *Mem.* 2. 60.
[6] Kirkman, *Macklin* 1. 345.

levy a heavy tribute; and to make her attractive by means of her singing and dancing and by furnishing her with a rival suitor in a fake French marquis. Things proceed exactly to their wish till the sudden arrival of the young rake's father, who discovers that Lucinda is the long lost daughter of his dearest friend, and takes her out of their clutches. Buck must not marry her now—he must reform first.

The *Englishman in Paris* was advertised as 'an answer to a French farce called the Frenchman in London' by M. de Boissy. Boissy's play was not new—the first production of it on the French stage had been as far back as the summer of 1727[7]—but Foote had probably seen it in Paris during his recent visit there. Foote's farce is not in any real sense an answer to Boissy's, since he takes practically the same view of the respective characteristics of the two nations, and since his plot is not sufficiently similar to have any of the element of parody. Each play is a satire upon national manners and each author rallies his own nation rather more than its rival. The ostensible purpose of the *Englishman in Paris* is to show the folly of sending English youths abroad to finish off their education with the fripperies of French life; but the teaching is not clear.

In 1756 Buck and Lucinda came again before the public in the *Englishman Returned from Paris*. And thereby hangs a tale of Foote and one of his friends. Arthur Murphy was somewhat younger than Foote and had not yet written anything dramatic, though he had already published his *Gray's-Inn Journal*, a periodical on the order of the *Spectator* and the *Rambler*. In 1754, at Foote's suggestion,[8] he had gone upon the stage. After the success of the *Englishman in Paris*, an idea came to him of a sequel for that comedy. He

[7] Cf. French ed. of the play, Paris 1813. An anonymous English translation published about two years after the *Englishman in Paris* came out, is prefaced by a letter to Foote.

[8] Jessé Foot, *Murphy*, p. 12.

sketched plot and characters and then confided the scheme to his friend. Foote immediately appropriated the ideas—and produced the sequel himself.

The *Englishman Returned from Paris* introduces us to Buck after he has been cultivated by life abroad into as arrant a coxcomb as ever strode into a parlor. He comes mincing along in his smart costume, jabbering bad French to a host of servants, for all the world like Sir Fopling Flutter. His father has just died, leaving a will containing that particular proviso upon which so many of the English comedies of the period depend,—the marriage of the son and ward on pain of the forfeiture of several thousand pounds by whichever refuses. Buck has now become so cultivated that he does not contemplate honorable marriage. After he has shown his hand, Lucinda plays a little trick on him. She serves him some harmless tea, and then tragically informs him that, finding that he does not love her, she has determined that no other woman shall have him, and has poisoned the tea in order that they may meet death together. Buck, who has fewer brains than graces, believes her. He feels himself dying, calls for physicians, submits to blistering and bandaging, and prepares for his end. In this state he is easily persuaded to renounce his right to Lucinda and her legacy. When in addition to this, he has consigned his gorgeous trousseau to the flames and dismissed his French retinue, he is informed that all was a trick.

The *Englishman Returned from Paris* is a better play than its predecessor. The national feeling is more intense and the satire more forceful. In the *Englishman in Paris* the alleged folly of sending a youth abroad for education was hardly proved, since Buck returned no worse and possibly better for his experience; but in the sequel, which intends the same moral, Buck is portrayed as having lost his virility and sincerity without having acquired even external merits in their stead.

How far this superiority is due to Murphy cannot be stated

because his play is not extant. Naturally Murphy was hurt at Foote's action, but he went ahead with his own comedy and produced it as soon as possible under the name he had originally chosen, the *Englishman from Paris*. But this was not till some time after Foote's production had taken the novelty away from the story. The public liked Foote's play the better of the two. It had a fine run, while Murphy's lived only one night—which proves nothing more than that a play planned by Murphy and worked over by Foote enjoys double the chance of one planned by Murphy and not worked over by Foote.

The first production of Foote's play—carefully announced as 'a sequel to the Englishman at Paris by the same Author'—took place at Covent Garden on the third of February, 1756. The part of Buck was acted by the author and that of Lucinda by Mrs. Bellamy. Both original and sequel were in the bookstores by the middle of the month.[9] On the first of the following April the *Englishman in Paris* was given at Drury Lane and two days later on the same stage Murphy's sequel had its one production. In both Miss Macklin took the part of Lucinda and Woodward that of Buck. Murphy had brought in an allusion to his friend's plagiarism. To an inquiry about the identity of Sir Charles Buck the reply is made, 'O! yes, . . . you have an impostor in town, who, with much easy familiarity and assurance, has stolen my writings, &c, and not only robbed me, but has impudently dared to assume my name; but I am the true Sir Charles Buck.' Wilkinson said this speech occasioned a great roar, the only one heard during the evening. There was also a prologue written and spoken by the author, in which 'he was very severe on his friend Samuel; but Sam had got the money,' observes Wilkinson, who always finds a monetary motive in his old associate, 'and it disturbed him not.'[10]

[9] *Pub. Ad.*, Feb. 12, 1756.
[10] *Mem.* 2. 71-2.

Murphy was nothing if not irascible, and in his anger over Foote's treatment of his sequel to the *Englishman in Paris* and affronts he conceived himself to have received from certain other persons, he published anonymously a two act farce entitled the *Triple Revenge,* satirizing John Hill, Theophilus Cibber, John Rich, Foote, and Garrick—all but the last, who is said to have been consulted about it, with decided sharpness. Dapperwit, who represents Foote, is discovered plucking his beard—a constant habit of Foote's—and saying, 'A new Farce—it's true a Gentleman told me of the subject first; and, in confidence too! by way of consulting my judgment—"Thus do I ever make my fool my purse"—to consult me!—a blockhead!—he might know me better.' The play, which came out in 1756, was not included in Murphy's own collected edition of his works: Genest[11] gives an abstract of it. Murphy introduced Foote also in his *Know Your Own Mind,* acted at Covent Garden in the last year of Foote's life. He says some sharp things of him, but the portrait is by no means unfriendly—Dashwould is the best man in the story. There was a third portrayal of Foote intended, it seems; for after Murphy's death some notes were found among his papers to this effect:

> Foote gives a dinner—large company—characters come one by one:—sketches them as they come:—each enters,—he glad to see each.—At dinner, his wit, affectation, pride, his expence, his plate, his jokes, his stories;—all laugh;—all go, one by one,—all abused, one by one;—his toadeaters stay;—he praises himself:—in a passion against all the world.[12]

If Murphy had published this, he would have told nothing but what everybody who had ever been in Foote's circle knew perfectly well. Cumberland[13] relates a circumstance

[11] 4. 459-61.
[12] J. Foot, *Murphy,* p. 172.
[13] *Mem.,* p. 167.

almost precisely like this—only that it had a more dramatic climax because the man whom Foote happened to be making his butt after his supposed departure had not departed. Wilkinson relates another, and this time also Foote was overheard.

During the summer of 1756 Foote amused the Haymarket with the dramatization of an event that had taken place at Covent Garden the previous January, in connection with a revival of Lee's *Rival Queens,* with Barry as Alexander, Mrs. Woffington as Roxana, the conqueror's first wife, and Mrs. Bellamy as Statira, the new wife who supplants her. Mrs. Bellamy was the best dresser upon the English stage. Indeed, it has been maintained that this characteristic, with her personal beauty and her social affiliations, accounted for her great vogue. At this period it was customary for costumes to be furnished by the management, and they were often shabby enough; but the terms of her contract allowed her a certain sum with which she was to purchase her own. She had just imported two new Paris gowns. When she appeared in the Green-Room attired in one of them, a rich yellow over which she had thrown a gorgeous purple robe, Mrs. Woffington's second-hand gown of pale straw-color, though worn but once and then by the Princess of Wales, dwindled under the candles into a dirty white. 'Madam,' cried Peg, 'I desire you will never more upon any account wear those clothes in the piece we perform tonight.' Altercation followed, but Mrs. Bellamy acquiesced. Her promise was given willingly because she remembered the other gown, which was yet more splendid. This she donned the second night. When her rival perceived the trick, her rage rose almost to madness. And at the moment in the fifth act when Alexander's first wife kills the new favorite, Roxana's dagger literally drove Statira from the stage. 'Though I despise revenge, I do not dislike retaliation,' says Mrs. Bellamy. 'I therefore put on my yellow and purple once more.' The effect upon the quick Irish temper of the Woffington was

what might be expected, and the Green-Room resounded with mutual recriminations that veiled but thinly allusions to certain diplomats and cabinet ministers who followed in these ladies' respective trains. The incident seems to have closed in a resort to physical force.

Foote may have been lounging about Covent Garden when this happened; in any case, a fortnight later he was acting there.[14] His version of the event has not been preserved, but it is easy to imagine the farcical scenes that he made out of it,—fine gowns, beautiful ladies, fists, diplomats, and all. He called it the *Green-Room Squabble or a Battle Royal between the Queen of Babylon and the Daughter of Darius.*[15]

Early in the next year Foote brought out a new play, the *Author.* Some time prior to this he had become intimate with a certain Welsh gentleman of large means and aristocratic connections, a Mr. Apreece (or Ap-Rice), then very well known in London. Apreece was a friendly soul, extraordinarily devoted to the society of literary men, and innocently proud of his ancient family, of which he talked a great deal. People were very jocose about his family pride.[16] Foote had already made a slight allusion to it in the *Knights.* Apreece was just the sort of man to tempt Foote's mirth, for he was, furthermore, almost grotesque in both appearance and manner. He was corpulent and awkward and looked at one with 'a broad, unmeaning stare,' talking boisterously, rapidly, indistinctly, and when he was not talking, holding his mouth open as if to recall what he *had* said. He had also an odd

[14] *Pub. Ad.,* Feb. 2.

[15] For Mrs. Bellamy's account of these events with reference to Foote's farce, see her *Apology* 2. 205-11. This was not the first time that the *Rival Queens* had been acted in earnest. Genest (4. 466) cites a similar quarrel between the famous Mrs. Barry and Mrs. Boutell over a veil, which had more serious consequences.

[16] See a reference to the family, *Gent. Mag.* 25. 153-4. The writer of this article was acquainted with Foote's plays (for he quotes from Lady Pentweazle), but Foote had not at that time written the *Author.*

habit of constantly moving his head towards his left shoulder.[17] He was the subject of Foote's new burlesque. After both men were dead, an anonymous writer in the *Town and Country Magazine*[18] stated:

> The late Mr. Ap...ce, who was a very singular man, told Foote one day at dinner that the ministry had quite overlooked him, and that he thought if Foote would bring him upon the stage, he was sure government would certainly take notice of him. Upon this hint Foote wrote the Author, and Ap...ce was so much resolved that his own character should be known in that of Cadwallader, that he lent the mimic a suit of cloaths he had been very conspicuous in at court. Somebody hinted that he did not use his friend well, thus to expose him. 'You are quite mistaken, I do it at his own request, in order to make his fortune.'

Whether or not this is true one cannot say, but it has often been asserted that in the beginning Apreece had no thought of objecting to the *Author*.[19]

The play opens with that situation which became so hackneyed in English comedy after Sheridan and Goldsmith had employed it, of a relative who has given himself out as dead returning incognito to test his ward. Young Cape, though barely subsisting as a book-seller's hack, promptly shows his integrity by refusing to write certain spurious puffs for which his disguised father applies to him. The boy is in love with Cadwallader's (Apreece's) sister Arabella. His friend Sprightly thinks he may secure an ally in Cadwallader's wife. And so he procures him an invitation to dine at the house and then carries off her husband to a farcical banquet given by a man whom he introduces as His Highness Prince Potowowski, Tartarian Ambassador to England from the Cham of the Calmucks. Meanwhile young Cape, according to advices, sets out to win his ally, but the warmth and style

[17] See Davies, *Garrick* 1. 201 ff.

[18] 9. 599 f.

[19] See Davies, *Garrick* cited above. Wilkinson also makes the statement.

of his attempt, overheard by Arabella, lose him his sweetheart, and the resulting explanations, overheard by Mrs. Cadwallader, lose him in turn his newly won confederate. At this juncture enter the Potowowski group—Cape's still unrecognized father among them. Then follow discoveries, forgiveness, the proving of pedigrees, and the securing of the bride.

Foote acted Cadwallader with extraordinary effectiveness, supported by perhaps the best actress of the time for low comedy, Kitty Clive, as Becky (Mrs. Cadwallader). 'There is no beholding this excellent Actress, without Laughing at every Turn of her Countenance,' said one of the reporters who saw her as Becky.[20]

Some of the scenes are highly amusing in a farcical way, and it is no wonder Mr. and Mrs. Cadwallader became the talk of the town. 'Mr. Cape, this is Becky,' says Cadwallader,

> my dear Becky, child, this is a great poet—ah, but she does not know what that is, a little foolish or so, but of a very good family—here, Becky, child, won't you ask Mr. Cape to come and see you?

Becky gives the invitation, and Cadwallader continues:

> Hey, ecod do, Cape, come and look at her grotto and shells, and see what she has got.—Well, he'll come, Beck,—ecod do, and she'll come to the third night of your tragedy, hey! won't you, Beck?—isn't she a fine girl? hey, you; humour her a little, do;—hey, Beck; he says you are as fine a woman as ever he—ecod who knows but he may make a copy of verses on you?—there, go, and have a little chat with her, talk any nonsense to her, no matter what; she's a damn'd fool, and won't know the difference.

Then he falls to talking with Sprightly of how well he would like to be introduced to certain lords of the latter's acquain-

[20] *London Chron.* 1. 167. See also Wilkinson, *Mem.* 2. 55-6 and *Actor's Tablet*, p. 227.

tance. Sprightly replies that these gentlemen must all have heard of the antiquity of Cadwallader's house.

> CAD. Antiquity! hey! Beck, where's my pedigree?
> MRS. CAD. Why, at home, locked up in the butler's pantry.
> CAD. In the pantry! What the devil, how often have I bid you never to come out without it?

The scene where young Cape attempts to get into the good graces of Becky is almost worthy of camparison with what Vanbrugh had done with Hoyden, or Congreve with Miss Prue. Cape and Becky are discovered at cards:

> CAPE. Pshaw, hang cards; there are other amusements better suited to a tête-à-tête, than any the four aces can afford us.
> MRS. CAD. What pastimes be they?—We be n't enough for hunt the whistle, nor blind-man's-buff: but I'll call our Bell, and Robin, the butler. Dicky will be here an bye.
> CAPE. Hold a minute. I have a game to propose, where the presence of a third person, especially Mr. Cadwallader's, would totally ruin the sport.
> MRS. CAD. Aye, what can that be?
> CAPE. Can't you guess?
> MRS. CAD. Not I; questions and commands, mayhap.
> CAPE. Not absolutely that—some little resemblance; for I am to request, and you are to command.
> MRS. CAD. Oh, daisy! that's charming. I never played at that in all my born days; come, begin then.
> CAPE. Can you love me?
> MRS. CAD. Love you! But is it in jest or earnest?
> CAPE. That is as you may please to determine.
> MRS. CAD. But mayn't I ask you questions, too?
> CAPE. Doubtless.
> MRS. CAD. Why, then, do you love me?
> CAPE. With all my soul.
> MRS. CAD. Upon your *sayso*.
> CAPE. Upon my *sayso*.
> MRS. CAD. I am glad on't with all my heart. This is the rarest pastime!
> CAPE. But you have not answered my question.
> MRS. CAD. Hey? that's true. Why, I believe there's no love lost.

CAPE. So; our game will soon be over; I shall be *up* at a deal. Though I wish I may not be engaged to play deeper here than I intended. (*Aside.*)

MRS. CAD. Well, now 'tis your turn.

CAPE. True; aye; but 'zooks you are too hasty; the pleasure of this play, like hunting does not consist in immediately *chopping* the prey.

MRS. CAD. No! How then?

CAPE. Why, first I am to start you, then run you a little in view, then lose you, then unravel all the tricks and doubles you make to escape me.

You fly o'er hedge and stile,
I pursue for many a mile,
You grow tired at last and *quat,*
Then I catch you, *and all that.*

MRS. CAD. Dear me, there's a deal on't! I shall never be able to hold out long; I had rather be taken in view.

CAPE. I believe you.

MRS. CAD. Well, come, begin and start me, that I may come the sooner to *quatting*—Hush! here's sister; what the deuce brought her? Bell will be for learning this game too, but don't you teach her for your life, Mr. Poet.

All London went to see Foote's new farce, and returned home to tell their friends about it and to quote phrases from it. The Apreeces were there themselves the first night and applauded with the rest. Davies insists that at that time Apreece really enjoyed the performance. But for some reason Foote felt himself under the necessity of disavowing the portraiture even before the play was first acted. The same issue of the *Public Advertiser* that announced the initial performance printed on another page the following note:

> Whereas it has been represented to the managers of Drury-lane Theatre, that Mr. Foote in his new Farce call'd the *Author,* intends introducing the Character of a Gentleman for whom he has the greatest Esteem and Regard, he thinks it incumbent on him to assure the Public, that all the Personages in the Piece are fictitious and general.
>
> Samuel Foote.
>
> James-street, Feb. 4.

Nobody believed this, of course, and as the number of persons who saw and heard about the comedy increased, Apreece and his wife became more and more conspicuous. They could not walk in the park, or step into a coffee-house but people would ogle and whisper, 'My dear Becky,' and 'Here comes Dicky.'[21]

The situation at length became intolerable. Foote was deaf to complaints. With him, Davies says, 'When gain was in view, humanity was out of the question; and Mr. A . . . had himself unluckily given authority to the satire, by personally encouraging the propagation of it.'[22] Failing with the author, Apreece applied to the manager to suppress the play. He even threatened. Garrick replied that 'upon an honorable occasion, he should not decline a gentleman's invitation,' but begged Mr. Apreece to consider that he was advanced in years and somewhat corpulent and unwieldy for a duel. He said, however, that his sympathies were with him, but that he could really do nothing in the matter, since he was only a sharer in the *Author* with Foote and Lacy. If Apreece desired to carry the matter further, he said, he might apply to the Lord Chamberlain, who he was sure 'had too much humanity to suffer any gentleman to be hurt by personal representation.' This Apreece proceeded to do. The first performance of the *Author* in the winter of 1758 was to be on Foote's benefit night following the *Merchant of Venice,* in which Foote and Mrs. Clive acted Shylock and Portia. Wilkinson was again assisting Foote, who had written a new scene[23] for him, very coarse, but spirited, in which he took a passing shot at the kind of sentimentality that encourages crime by petting the criminal. Although the general idea was not bad, the specific application to the Foundling Hospital and the Magdalene—the latter just established—

[21] Wilkinson, *Mem.* 1. 146; 2. 52-3. Davies, *Garrick,* Chap. 18.
[22] Davies cited above.
[23] Printed *Monthly Mirror* 7. 39-41.

seems scarcely justified. However, these institutions suffered nothing, for the play was not performed—and I think the scene was never acted. The very day it was to have been given an order came from the Duke of Devonshire prohibiting it.

The whole family connection of the Apreeces was behind the prohibition. Once six years after this and some time after Apreece's death, when Wilkinson was to act Cadwallader at Newcastle during the week of the races, a deputation of young men headed by Apreece's son forced him to withdraw the part.[24] Nevertheless the *Author* was subsequently acted many times in London, and Cadwallader was perhaps considered the star part in all Foote's acting.

It was unfortunate for the usefulness of Foote's work, as well as for his reputation with posterity, that the comedy of the *Author* was so much better known for his farcical acting of Cadwallader, which scarcely deserves to be called satire, than for its worthier portrayal of the distresses of the publisher's hack. For at this date attention needed to be directed to the glaring injustices under which literary men were living. The very year that the *Author* appeared Oliver Goldsmith made over his splendid talents to Griffiths, whereby that unscrupulous editor was supplied with articles which he and his wife first garbled, and then printed in their *Monthly Review*. The year previous, Christopher Smart, already the author of some considerable work, among other things a translation of Horace which was to prove a mine of wealth to booksellers, had signed the most astounding of all leases, the lease of himself for ninety-nine years[25] to a bookseller named Gardener. Grudging personal patronage was still as a rule the main dependence of writers. It was only two years before the production of the *Author* that Dr. Johnson wrote

[24] Wilkinson, *Mem.* 4. 12-16.

[25] See DeQuincey, *Oliver Goldsmith,* ed. Riverside Press, p. 355; Forster, *Goldsmith* 1. 382.

his famous letter to Chesterfield declining the patronage he would earlier have welcomed. Foote had already asserted his own independence in his preface to the *Englishman in Paris.*

When Foote wrote the *Author* he was thirty-seven years of age. He had taken his bent. While the plays described in the present chapter show that he had emerged from the sketchy and formless writing of the *Diversions,* they make it clear that his bent was for burlesque. His plots were farcical; his characters, caricatures.

CHAPTER III

The *Minor*

Foote's most famous play is the *Minor*. It was first produced at the Crow Street Theatre in Dublin on the twenty-eighth of January, 1760. People crowded to be present, for it had been constantly puffed in the papers ever since its author's arrival in the city. Foote had talked a great deal about it at the fashionable tables where he was entertained, repeating the best things, acting out parts, telling stories of the individuals who were burlesqued. But Dublin did not like it.

The literary form in which the *Minor* is cast is that of the *Rehearsal,* which enables the author to explain his point and offer justifications. When the curtain rises Foote is discovered conversing with some loungers at the Haymarket. What he says in this prologue will be considered in another connection. I proceed to the play rehearsed. In describing its plot I take the final three act version rather than that of two acts in which it first appeared. The satirical objective was Methodism and in particular George Whitefield, at that time the most popular of its preachers.

The skeleton of the action is the same as in the *Author*—a disguised father's inquiry into the conduct of his son. Sir William Wealthy, in the habit of a German baron, has made himself one of a gang of sharpers who are fast despoiling the boy, Sir George, of his money. Mr. Richard Wealthy, Sir William's brother, advises turning the young scapegrace out of doors, as he, in fact, has done with his daughter when she refused his selection of a husband. Sir William employs Shift to impersonate an auctioneer named Smirk, through whom Sir George attempts the raising of funds. One of 'the Minor's' vices is seen in his negotiations with Mrs. Cole, a procuress. She has been converted to Methodism through the preaching of Dr. Squintum and is full of the cant of pretended piety. 'Oh, it was a wonderful work,' she says.

> There had I been tossing in the sea of sin, without rudder or compass. And had not the good gentleman piloted me into the harbour of grace, I must have struck against the rocks of reprobation, and have been quite swallowed up in the whirlpool of despair. He was the precious instrument of my spiritual sprinkling.—But, however, Sir George, if your mind be set upon a young country thing, to-morrow night I believe I can furnish you. . . .
>
> I have advertised this morning, in the register-office, for servants under seventeen; and ten to one but I light on something that will do.

In Mrs. Cole's house Sir George finds his cousin Lucy, who has been turned out by her father. She throws herself on Sir George's mercy. His better nature asserts itself at this claim upon it, and he takes her under his protection. About the same time he begins to see into the sharpers who have been fleecing him and institutes means to have them arrested. The recognition of Sir William is brought about at this point, and in the same scene Lucy's father is reconciled to her. The play concludes with the betrothal of the cousins.

Mrs. Cole's prototype was 'the celebrated Mother Douglas'[1] of Covent Garden. She appears in three of Hogarth's pictures, 'Enthusiasm Delineated,' 'Industry and Idleness' (Plate XI), the 'March to Finchley.' The play satirizes also the spirit of caste, and the pursuit of vice by shallow young men who fancy that is the way to be fashionable, the craze for auctions (already treated by Foote in other work), and a popular auctioneer. Smirk, the auctioneer, was Abraham Langford, who succeeded Cock in his auction rooms in the Piazza, Covent Garden.[2] Loader was a gambler named

[1] *Monthly Rev.* 23. 83; *Observations, Good or Bad,* etc. See also E. B. Chancellor, the *Pleasure Haunts of London,* p. 179.

[2] See *London Mag.* 43. 459, *D. N. B.,* on Langford, and Wheatley and Cunningham's *London* 3. 84. For Foote's intention in the burlesque, Wilkinson, *Mem.* 2. 184, Dibdin, *Hist. of the Stage* 5. 147, *Monthly Rev.* 23. 83.

Lookup.[3] But these must have been almost buried under the storm of the attack upon Methodism.

George Whitefield was at this date daily drawing immense crowds to his chapel in Tottenham Court Road, or perhaps to the side of some flimsy stage meant for wrestlers at a country fair, or to the race-course, or even the gallows. In vivid, intensely emotional sermons he thrilled his great audiences with the fear of hell-fire and a longing for the new birth. Our accurate countryman, Benjamin Franklin, estimated that thirty thousand persons could distinctly hear Whitefield's voice in the open air, and yet it was sweet, musical, varied. His gestures were faultless, his figure both graceful and imposing. Garrick declared he could pronounce the word Mesopotamia so as to move an audience to tears. Under the spell of his preaching the prudent Franklin once emptied his pockets of all their silver and gold, though he had come provided with coppers. Lord Chesterfield, for all his polite self-possession, sprang from his seat with a 'Good God, he is gone!' when the old blind man in Whitefield's description tottered on the verge of the precipice of sin.

In his unregenerate days Whitefield had loved the theatre, but now he discountenanced it. He said, 'When you see the players on the stage, you see the devil's children grinning at you.' His influence was tremendous; Methodists set their faces against the diversion. Mrs. Bellamy's story of their burning a building in which she was to act in Glasgow in 1764 and destroying every part of the stage and her entire wardrobe[4] is not unusual; a similar event had happened in the same city in 1753.[5] No wonder the actor folk were bitter against these religionists and their teacher.

In the *Minor* Whitefield goes under the name of Dr. Squintum; doubtless because he was cross-eyed. Some portraits show an actual squint of the left eye very much like that which appears in one of the pictures of Foote as Squintum.

[3] *N. & Q.* 10th S. VIII. 141.

[4] *Apology* 4. 59-60. Same event referred to, Wilkinson, *Mem.* 3. 230 f.

[5] *Scots Mag.* 15. 362.

He is not one of the regular *dramatis personae,* but comes in only through references by other characters to situations enacted off the stage. There is an epilogue in which Shift, who has been impersonating Smirk, the auctioneer, pretends to be Squintum and makes the following speech:

> 'Gad, I've a thriving traffic in my eye—
> Near the mad mansions of Moorfields I'll bawl;
> Friends, fathers, mothers, sisters, sons, and all,
> Shut up your shops, and listen to my call.
> With labour, toil, all second means dispense,
> And live a rent-charge upon Providence.
> Prick up your ears; a story now I'll tell,
> Which once a widow, and her child befel—
> I knew the mother and her daughter well.
> Poor, it is true, they were; but never wanted,
> For whatsoe'er they ask'd, was always granted:
> One fatal day, the matron's truth was tried,
> She wanted meat and drink, and fairly cried.

The epilogue continues:

> [Child.] Mother, you cry!
> [Moth.] Oh, Child, I've got no bread.
> [Child.] What matters that? Why Providence a'n't dead!
> With reason good, this truth the child might say,
> For there came in, at noon, that very day,
> Bread, greens, potatoes, and a leg of mutton,
> A better sure a table ne'er was put on;
> Aye, that might be, ye cry, with those poor souls;
> But ne'er had we a rasher for the coals.
> And d'ye deserve it? How d'ye spend your days?
> In pastimes, prodigality, and plays!
> Let's go see *Foote*! Ah, *Foote's* a precious *limb*!
> Old-nick will soon a football make of him!
> For foremost rows in side-boxes you shove,
> Think you to meet with side-boxes above?
> Where giggling girls and powered fops may sit,—
> No, you will all be cramm'd into the pit,
> And crowd the house for *Satan's* benefit.
> Oh! what you snivel! well, do so no more;
> Drop, to atone, your money at the door,
> And (if I please)—I'll give it to the poor.

As soon as possible after his return from Ireland, Foote prepared the *Minor* for production in the revised form of three acts, with the introductory scene, the character of Smirk, and the epilogue added.[6] He brought it out at the Haymarket under his own management on the twenty-eighth of June, 1760. Its popularity was immediate and immense. Wilkinson made a trip from Winchester to see it (since he was acting there the parts he had seen by Foote in Ireland) and found the crowds so great that it was difficult to get in.[7] After the eighth night, performances were regularly on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. Early in August the statement was published that,

> *Mr. Foote's* License from the Lord Chamberlain for the New Theatre in the Haymarket, expiring the last Day of this Month, and Vast Numbers of People not being able to gain Admittance, on the three usual Days of Performance, *Mr. Foote* is encouraged to open the Theatre every Night.

The notices show that this was justified. The Haymarket performances continued daily until the term expired. By November 22 the play was being produced at Drury Lane, with Foote in the cast; and two days afterward was seen at both the winter theatres simultaneously.

It will not be supposed that a play so bluntly attacking a religious sect went unchallenged. It was published immediately[7] and this gave opportunity for criticism by those who would not deign to go to the Haymarket to see it acted. The book was noticed in the July number of the *Monthly Review* for 1760 with the statement:

> The success of the present performance, during the representation, arose from the Author's extraordinary talent at mimickry; but it is not calculated to please equally in the perusal. The principal objects here ridiculed are, a noted Bawd, and a first-

[6] Wilkinson, *Mem.* 2. 184.
[7] *Ibid.* 2. 235.

> rate Auctioneer; who, it is generally agreed, were exquisitely *taken off;* but the satire levelled at the great Leader of the Methodists, seems to be extremely out of character. It is no less unjust to Mr. W... than absurd, to suppose a man of his penetration, either conniving at, or being the dupe of, an old Bawd's hypocrisy, in continuing to follow her iniquitous occupation, while she frequents the tabernacle, and cants about the new Birth. And when we are told that an occasional Hymn is given out, and a thanksgiving Sermon preached, on occasion of mother Cole's (Douglas's) recovery from sickness; who can forbear smiling—not with approbation of the conceit, but with contempt for the Author of such improbable scandal?—We despise and abhor all enthusiastic flights, and high pretentions to extraordinary sanctity, as much as Mr. Foote can do; but without entering into the enquiry whether or not these are proper objects of play-house ridicule, it is most certain, that no man or body of men, ought to be charged with more than they are guilty of; and there is not a juster maxim in the moral world, than—*'GIVE THE DEVIL HIS DUE.'*

In August appeared an anonymous pamphlet supposed by some to be by Whitefield, but probably by Martin Madan,[8] a cousin of Cowper's and author of well-known hymns. It was entitled *Christian and Critical Remarks on a Droll, or Interlude, called The Minor. Now acting by a Company of Stage Players in the Hay-market; and Said to be acted by Authority. In which The Blasphemy, Falsehood, and Scurrility of that Piece is properly considered, answered, and exposed. By a Minister of the Church of Christ.* The author takes the characteristic attitude of his sect to all theatricals. He thinks that Foote's 'sole intent is, at the expence of any thing . . . to display his knack at mimickry.' 'Regeneration,' he says, 'in whatever sense the methodists may use it, is one of the most essential articles of the chris-

[8] The two copies in the Boston Public Library are listed under this name. The authority is perhaps found in the footnote in Foote's *Apology for the Minor. In a letter to the Rev. Mr. Baine,* which states that the *Christian and Critical Remarks* was 'wrote by the Rev. Mr. M..d..n.'

tian religion; yet this regeneration or new birth, which Christ and his apostles have mentioned with the highest reverence, is, by Mr. Foote, put into the mouth of a bawd.' In reference to the mock sermon of the epilogue, he says, 'That the method of preaching adopted by our methodist teacher, is in many respects very different from what is generally heard in parish churches, is not to be denied; but it must be considered, that the bulk of his congregation is very different also from the generality that go there; and such as precept would have very little effect upon, unenforced by example. This therefore has induced him frequently to bring into his discourse, short and apposite relations, (the truth of which he is able to testify) . . . . Of this kind is the story of the mother and child, laugh'd at by Mr. Foote, which, whether it was made use of at the tabernacle or no, by no means deserves ridicule, as it tends to encourage that security and faith which all christians ought to place in the goodness of providence.'

Some one willing to support Foote took this up in a *Letter to Mr. F—te Occasioned by The Christian and Critical Remarks on his Interlude, called The Minor. To which is added An Appendix, Relative to a Serious Address to the Methodists themselves.* He is sarcastic about the Methodists, particularly 'Wh,' and offers answers that he thinks Foote might make to the criticisms. It is a poor piece of work, and may well have given Foote the impetus to write a reply of his own.

This he did in a *Letter from Mr. Foote, To the Reverend Author of The Remarks Critical and Christian on the Minor,* first issued in pamphlet form in 1760.[9] He begins by objecting to the terms *droll, interlude,* and *farce,* as applied to the *Minor,* for which he claims the dignity of comedy. The personalities characteristic of controversial writing are present throughout. 'You err,' he says, 'in your notions of the

[9] Reprinted, Badcock 1. xciii ff. and Cooke 3. 160 ff.

nature of the ancient comedy; and are unjust in attributing its revival to me, when, at the same time, that honour is solely due to the reverend gentleman whose advocate you are.' The *Minor* 'wants just half its construction to be ranked in the order of ancient comedies,' inasmuch as like them it treats persons that are real, and in contrast to them it has a fable that is fictitious.

> But let us on the other hand consider the claims of *your hero* for a niche near Thespis, in the temple of Apollo; and for this purpose we will examine one of his pieces, to which I was a spectator. The piece is pretty well known; and after the manner of Aristophanes and Plautus, we will distinguish it from the principal incident, by the name of *Mutton,* a Comedy.
>
> As an introduction to this entertainment, we are told by the chorus or prologue, that the persons were then living, that the dialogue really happened between them, and that the catastrophe of the leg of mutton and turnips was a literal fact. In this composition, you see, sir, we have at once every member of the ancient comedy. The method of declaiming, or conveying it too, was precisely after the Greek, in recitative; and though we had not the accompaniment of the *tibiæ dextræ* and *sinistræ,* yet a melodious nasal twang, produced by an orchestra of old women, who surrounded the actor, ably supplied that deficiency. To this when I add, that, after the manner of Thespis, the piece was exhibited in a cart upon a common, not a single doubt can, I think, remain . . . . then, sir, the earnest inclination your reverend friend always shows to display his abilities in a cart, even though it be with a criminal at Tyburn, I think we may venture, without any impeachment of our understanding, to pronounce him the real restorer of the ancient Thespian Cart Comedy.

Foote's opponent had called him to account for inconsistency in making fun of Whitefield's cross-eyes, since he had himself declared that mere natural deformity was not, any more than provincial dialect, a proper subject for satire. To this he replies that 'if men, with these infirmities, will attempt things which those very infirmities have rendered them incapable of properly executing, it is their own fault if the source that should acquire them compassion degenerates into a

fountain of ridicule.' In reply to the statement that he alone has produced real persons on the stage, he cites Shakespeare, Molière, Dryden, Pope, la Bruyère, Boileau, for the same treatment of individuals. Throughout the discussion he assumes that Whitefield is insincere, and he even manufactures a story about his mother in order to render her son the more odious.

His answer to the argument that his opponent had drawn from the Christian Fathers' prohibition against the theatre is cogent:

> Can any proposition be clearer than that the prohibition of the Roman theatres to the primitive Christians has no more relation to our playhouses than a horse-race at Barnet, or a ball upon my Lord Mayor's day . . . .
>
> But what, my good sir, was the practice of the several religious societies after the revival of letters? Were not the most interesting passages of the Old and New Testaments converted into plays?

His antagonist replied in an *Exhortatory Address to the Brethren in the Faith of Christ, Occasioned by a Remarkable Letter from Mr. Foote to the Rev. Author of Christian and Critical Remarks on the Minor.* An appended 'Serious Word' runs:

> *Dearly Beloved,*
>
> Since I finished the foregoing pages, it has pleased the *Lord* to afflict this nation with the greatest calamity that could possibly befall it; I mean the death of our most excellent Sovereign *George* the Second, of ever-blessed memory. What crime we may have committed to bring down this judgment upon us, is best known to him to whom all hearts are open. I do not say, that the uncommon countenance given to the maligners of the ministry of *Christ;* to the scoffers at religion; and in a word, to the author of the *Minor,* may have had its share in producing this heart-breaking effect; yet surely if the crimes of individuals ever provoke the Divine Vengeance to general punishments, we may with good grace ascribe to that, among the rest of our malefactions, the heavy misfortune with which we are at present burdened.

Thus did the Methodists in the controversy ever give a handle to their satirists. 'One would imagine,' said the *Critical Review,* 'that this waggish comedian had hired a set of dunces for whetstones to his wit.'

It was certainly unfortunate for the Methodists that writers who undertook to support an unpopular cause by argument should hold, as one of them put it, that, 'The Word of God contains all the Knowledge requisite for a Christian, and all human Learning is but *Vanity and Vexation of Spirit.*' The author of this dictum entitled his contribution, a *Letter to Mr. Foote, Occasioned by his Letter to the Reverend Author of the Christian and Critical Remarks on the Minor, containing a Refutation of Mr. Foote's Pamphlet, and a full Defence of the Principles and Practices of the Methodists,* and announced it as *By the Author of the Christian and Critical Remarks,* though it clearly is not by that writer. (Authors' names were bandied about with a complete disregard for facts both in the controversial articles and in the pasquinades that came out in the form of poems and plays.) And yet bigoted as most of these pamphleteers were, in the critical point at issue—the doctrines satirized in the *Minor*—they often had the whip hand through Foote's amazing ignorance of theology.

Not always, however, for a few absolute ignoramuses with the courage of their condition rushed into the lists with perfectly ludicrous articles. Such was an *Old Woman's Answer to the Minor.* The author, far from having seen the play acted, could not even have read it. The Minor (Sir George Wealthy) is assumed to be Foote himself. 'Well, *Minor,* thou art turned out an old Woman, I hear! Then prythee accept an old Woman's Challenge for once.' Perhaps the writer's confusion was worse confounded by the fact that Foote acted the part of Mrs. Cole. The eight or nine pages are mainly taken up with flinging Biblical epithets at Foote,—'the Serpent,' 'the Prince of the Power of the Air,' etc. The preface to the *Old Woman's Answer* was

published also separately with the title, a *Word to the Public, in answer to the Minor.*

Before the winter season opened at Drury Lane, where it was generally understood the *Minor* was in preparation, attempts were made to have the play suppressed. With this in view Whitefield's patroness, Lady Huntingdon, waited on the Lord Chamberlain, the Duke of Devonshire. The Duke was perhaps more gracious than accurate, for he told her ladyship that 'had the evil tendency of the play been found out before it was licensed, license would have been refused; as it was, he could do nothing immediately.'[10] But according to Walpole, he 'was firm' when the Archbishop of Canterbury 'tried to hinder The *Minor* from being played.' He 'would only let him correct some passages, and even of those the Duke has restored some.'[11]

Devonshire wrote Garrick on the twenty-fifth of October:

> I had a long conversation with his Grace, who would have authorized me to have used his name to stop 'The Minor,' but I got off from it, and concluded with sending a recommendation by Mr. Pelham to the author, to alter those passages that are liable to objection: his Grace would not point them out, so I think very little alteration may do.[12]

Secker, the Archbishop of Canterbury, was a very fair-minded man and although he had the orthodox horror of 'enthusiasm,' and deprecated the progress of Methodism, he recognized its earnestness and piety: it was he who described Wesley's aim as 'labouring to bring all the world to a solid, inward, vital religion.' It could not have been necessary for the Lord Chamberlain to depend upon his authority for the suppression of the play, but the latter probably disliked to take the full responsibility for opposing a man of Foote's

[10] J. P. Gledstone, *George Whitefield, M.A., Field Preacher,* p. 312. See also the *Life of the Countess of Huntingdon* 1. 209.

[11] *Letters* 5. 5.

[12] *Private Correspondence of David Garrick* 1. 120.

well-known vindictiveness. The Archbishop, on his side, was too wily to put his pen to anything of Foote's: he said if he should, Foote would publish the play as *'corrected* and *prepared* for the press by his Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury.' That the Duke of Devonshire was not indisposed to the *Minor* seems evident from the tone of Foote's prefatory letter, in which he said, 'The Minor, who is indebted for his appearance on *the stage* to your Grace's indulgence, begs leave to desire your further protection, at his entering into *the world.*' Lady Huntingdon next appealed to Garrick and received a promise from him that he would use his influence in excluding the comedy for the present. He said that, 'had he been aware of the offense it was calculated to give, it should never have appeared with his concurrence.'[13]

The production of the *Minor* at Drury Lane was to have been on the twenty-fifth of October; but was postponed for three weeks on account of the death of George II.[14] In the meantime appeared a *Letter to David Garrick, Esq.; Occasioned by the intended Representation of the Minor at the Theatre-Royal in Drury-Lane,* signed Anti-Prophanus. Halkett and Laing's *Dictionary of Anonymous and Pseudonymous Literature* assigns this to Abraham Portal on the authority of Nichols' *Literary Anecdotes* (2. 725). Nichols merely says that 'it is believed' Portal was the author, apparently because 'the initials A. P. are affixed' to it. This authorship does not seem probable to me, since the writer believes in the absolute unlawfulness of stage entertainments, while Portal, on the other hand, was a writer of plays both before and after this date and was box-keeper at Drury Lane. Tyerman[15] ascribes the pamphlet to Martin Madan, on the

[13] *Life of the Countess of Huntingdon* 1. 209; Gledstone, *Whitefield,* p. 312.

[14] Wilkinson, *Mem.* 3. 22.

[15] *Whitefield* 2. 434.

authority of the *Life of the Countess of Huntingdon,*[16] which, however, is not entirely reliable in its narrative of Foote and Whitefield. But Gillies[17] also says, 'said to be written by the Rev. Mr. Madan.' Gillies wrote in 1772. In the fashion characteristic of Whitefield's supporters, who habitually made the mistake of admitting lines of reasoning so tainted with bigotry as almost to destroy the effect of their whole argument, the writer of this letter predisposes the reader against him at the outset by calling the *Minor* a 'libel against the Christian religion' for the absurd reason that it uses such expressions as 'I'm damn'd glad,' ''zounds,' and 'what the devil.' But he is not unworthy of consideration in his exposition of the Biblical grounds of Whitefield's teaching about regeneration, the new birth, and saving grace.

A popular method of carrying on the jest with an author at this period seems to have been through the spurious additional scene. In the *Public Advertiser* of January 17, 1761, Foote registered his objection to such a use of his *Minor:*

> By an equivocal Advertisement in all the Papers of Yesterday, an Attempt is made to obtrude a Scene of Absurdity, Falsity, and Impertinence on the Public, as an Addition of Mr. *Foote's* to the *Minor;* to the Particulars in this Forgery, no other Answer is necessary, than to beg that the Gentleman mentioned would print the Works referred to; the Public will then be able to determine how impossible it is to steal from the one, and how improper to produce the other.
>
> Samuel Foote.

The advertisement to which he referred was as follows:

> This morning at Ten will be publish'd, Price 6d. With a Dedication to D... G..., Esq.; and printed the same size as the Minor, A New comic Scene to the Comedy of the Minor, written by Mr. Foote. Printed for J. Williams, Bookseller, upon Lud-

[16] I. 209.
[17] *Whitefield,* p. 232.

gate Hill. N. B. As Attempts have been made to pirate the Minor, this new Comic Scene is entered into the Hall Book of the Company of Stationers, and whoever presumes to print it, or any Part of it, shall be prosecuted with the utmost Severity; and Five Guineas Reward will be paid by the Publisher to any Person giving such Information, on Conviction of the Party so offending.

The setting is the Little Theatre just before the production of the *Minor*. Enter a Bard who offers Foote a play, which is refused. There is no action, merely a conversation in exposition of Foote, his points of view and his habits. He is represented as quite unable to conceive of a comedy that is not a personal burlesque. His style is rather well imitated with its 'hey now,' 'why, hey, faith'; but the piece is little more than a hodge-podge of quotations from his works.

More ambitious was the *Methodist: a Comedy, being A Continuation and Completion of the Plan of the Minor, Written by Mr. Foote; As it was intended to have been acted at the Theatre-Royal in Covent Garden, but for obvious Reasons suppressed* (third ed. 1761). The author, whose name was not given, was probably Israel Pottinger. While the purpose of the *Additional Scene* was to attack Foote, the purpose of this was to attack Whitefield and Methodism. The spirit is much more hostile than Foote's own. 'No private Pique,' the prologue says, 'this just Resentment draws,'

> Or brands a wretched *Squintum,* or his Cause:
> But since the Laws no Punishment provide
> For such as draw the Multitudes aside,
> The Poet seizes the corrective Rod
> To scourge the bold Blasphemer of his God.

But a 'Song in Character intended to have been sung by Squintum' shows the scourge applied rather to the blasphemer of the theatre:

Ye pious Servants that resort
  Where Faith a precious Harvest yields,
Who sweetly grunt at *Tottenham-Court,*
  Or loudly snivel at *Moorfields,*

In me securely put your Trust,
  And I shall still direct your Ways;
But then you must renounce the Lust,
  The fond Desire of seeing Plays.

. . .

Three Shillings! what a Sum you pay,
  A single Play with Ease to see;
When half the Money will defray
  Three Month's Expense in hearing me.

. . .

The crooked Paths of Folly shun,
  Of Plays and Players hate the Tribe;
To me and to my Doctrine run,
  You know the ready Way—*SUBSCRIBE.*

The plot is not without interest. It begins at the point in the *Minor* where Foote had concluded, the betrothal of Lucy and Sir George. Shift, Loader, and Mrs. Cole seek revenge through defaming Lucy's reputation. They are assisted by Jenny Cummins (the only new character), and Squintum. The latter is drawn into their plot by the reasoning that the victims will resort to his Tabernacle for consolation because of the misery into which they shall be brought. The scheme is foiled.

If the *Methodist* was scurrilous, the *Spiritual Minor* (1763) was abusive to the extent of ribaldry. It represents Squintum abetting Mrs. Cole's business, with specious arguments to the heroine against trying to earn Heaven—like the Papists—by works. He also gets money for himself from women whom he has persuaded to rob their husbands' strongboxes. The play is stupid as well as indecent.

There was a host of these squibs—dramatic and narrative, prose and verse. A *Satirical Dialogue between the celebrated Mr. F..te and Dr. Squintum, as it happened near the Great*

Lumber House in Tottenham-Court Road (1760) was said by the *Critical Review* to be 'jocularly dull.' I have not seen it. Another was the *Crooked Disciples' Remarks upon the Blind Guide's Method of Preaching; being a collection of the principal sayings, phraseology, rhapsodies, hyperboles, &c. commonly and peculiarly used by the Rev. Dr. Squintum at Tottenham Court, Moorfields, &c., taken verbatim from a constant attendance. By John Harman, Regulator of Enthusiasts* (1761); and another, *Letter of Expostulation from the Manager of the Theatre in Tottenham Court, to the Manager of the Theatre in the Hay-Market, relative to a new Comedy called 'the Minor.'* In this Whitefield, jealous of Foote's success in gulling the public, proposes that they enter into partnership.[18]

There were doubts of the Methodists in many minds at this date that must have made even this kind of abuse not so negligible as it now seems. 'We are not authorized,' said the *Critical Review*,[19] 'from any knowledge we have of the methodist principles, to say, that this dramatical satire [the *Spiritual Minor*] against them is not overcharged. The question depends upon the single fact, whether that set believes that good works are entirely unnecessary to salvation, and that, "the greater sins we commit, the greater glory do we give; the mediation being rendered meritorious in proportion to the offences." If such are the sentiments and the creed of methodism, it ought to be exterminated from civil society; and stronger precautions taken against it than against the vending arsenic, and other poisons.'

The year of Foote's accident the *Methodist and Mimic* appeared, a *Tale in Hudibrastick Verse by Peter Paragraph. Inscribed to Samuel Foote, Esq.* It recounts how the news of the accident is brought to the Tabernacle in Tottenham

[18] See Tyerman, *Whitefield* 2. 431, for a short quotation from this. I have not seen a copy of either of these last named.

[19] 16. 74.

Court after one of Squintum's sermons. Squintum states that he foresaw the catastrophe when Foote 'took off *Dame Cole* and *Me*.' One of the brethren proposes taking advantage of the occasion to draw Foote into the fold, for more money would be got through him than 'ever Abbot got by's Cloyster.' A brother is sent on this mission, but fails. The poem is as hostile to Whitefield as most of them. And the general attitude of the press toward the whole question is reflected in that of the critic[20] who 'can by no means relish the humour of this merry and diverting ballad' apparently rather for the tasteless jesting with Foote's accident than for the bad ethics of defaming Whitefield without proof of his guilt.

The idea of combining with Whitefield which Foote is represented as repudiating in this piece, he is represented as carrying out in a curious little volume by Charles Johnstone which treated allegorically a variety of popular matters, *Chrysal: or the Adventures of a Guinea, Wherein are exhibited Views of Several striking Scenes with curious and interesting Anecdotes of the most Noted Persons in Every Rank of Life, whose Hands it passed through, in America, England, Holland, Germany, and Portugal. By an Adept.* Dr. Hunch-Back, finding that his flock have grown apathetic, devises an appeal to their pride by engaging Momus, a ballad-maker, to ridicule them and to defame him, their leader. The negotiations are conducted through Mother Brimstone, and a hack-writer is employed to compose articles on both sides of the controversy. That the allegory should have been understood is indicative of the notoriety of the theme. A reader of the *Minor* recognizes Hunch-Back as Squintum, Mother Brimstone as Mother Cole, and Momus as Foote, an epithet often applied to him elsewhere. Whitefield's patroness, the Countess of Huntingdon, is introduced as the 'dutchess.'

[20] *Crit. Rev.* 21. 233.

During the last three months of 1760 there was a long series of articles upon the subject of the *Minor* in *Lloyd's Evening Post.* A contributor signing himself 'W' who had offered a criticism in the issue of October 20-2, wrote again November 19-21:

Sir,

I have already ventured at laying before the Publick a few sentiments relative to the comedy of the *Minor* (see Numb. 510, p. 386) in regard to the impropriety of such an exhibition on a publick stage; and now I beg leave to make an observation or two more, and to add a few Queries, to which I make no doubt but the Author will be so obliging as to give a fair and candid Answer.—I think the author says something to the following purport, by way of introduction to this Piece, that he makes use of it 'as the only method to redress an evil, which the Law cannot reach, or Reason reclaim': by which I am induced to believe, that he threw aside his Law-books before he arrived at the age of maturity.—I cannot find that Mr. Smirk in the least offends, by any of his smirking airs; therefore he cannot stand under the cognizance of that speech.—As to Mrs. Cole, she undoubtedly lies within the reach of the Law, and risques the chance of exposing her brawny shoulders to the lash of it.—In respect to Dr. Squintum, if it was thought prudent to shut up his Tabernacle, the Law most certainly has power to do it, and the Author might then, if willing, join in the Posse with a Constable's staff.—But the Laws of a free people are just and merciful, and give toleration to individuals, or worshiping the Creator after their own way, so long as they offend not the Established Church; and then, if Reason cannot reclaim these Beings, most surely Buffoonry must prove ineffectual. If we view this piece in its true light, it appears to have answered its end; but if we look upon it as intended for a publick good, it loses its efficacy. I confess, the Author has, in several parts of it, been as happy as Apelles was with his Sponge; he has struck out some beauties, yet it is pity but those wild flowers had blushed unseen. Pure Satire is commendable, but Scurrility ought never to approach the doors of a British Theatre.—Now I beg leave to ask the ingenious Author, Where, in this Piece, doth Satire exist? What publick good (as he talks of) could he aim at by such an exhibition; or could he be so vain as to imagine that such a performance would

reclaim one steeled in Iniquity, or cure another raging with Enthusiasm? I heartily wish him joy of the success he has already had, and think he now ought to be content, and tye up.

Yours, &c. W.

In the issue of November 12-14, 'Philodemus' discusses Methodism on the score of Foote's farce. His main points are that 'the Grace of Assurance' seems to be the main tenet of Methodism, that the 'devout Melancholy and Enthusiasm' of Methodism are bad, that it makes nothing of good works, that its ministers 'undignify the Priestly function' and seek lucrative gains.

This article was answered by John Wesley in the issue of November 17-19, as follows:

Nov. 17, 1760.

SIR,

IN your last Paper we had a letter from a very angry Gentleman (tho' he says, he had 'put himself into *as good humour* as possible,') who *personates* a Clergyman, but is, I presume, in reality a Retainer to the Theatre. He is very warm against the people, vulgarly termed *Methodists,* 'ridiculous Impostors,' 'religious Buffoons,' as he stiles them: 'Saint Errants' (a pretty and quaint phrase) full of 'Inconsiderateness, Madness, Melancholy, Enthusiasm': Teaching a 'knotty and unintelligible *System*' of Religion, yea, a 'contradictory or self contradicting'; nay, 'a mere Illusion,' a 'destructive Scheme and of pernicious Consequence': since 'an *Hypothesis* is a very slippery Foundation to hazard our *all* upon.'

Methinks the Gentleman has a little mistaken his character: he seems to have exchanged the Sock for the Buskin. But, be this as it may, general charges prove nothing; let us come to particulars. Here they are, 'The basis of *Methodism* is the *Grace of Assurance,*' (excuse a little impropriety of Expression) *Regeneration* being only a preparative to it.' Truly this is somewhat 'knotty and unintelligible.' I will endeavour to help him out. The fundamental doctrine of the people called *Methodists* is, whosoever will be saved, before all things it is necessary that he hold the true Faith; the Faith which works by Love, which

by means of the Love of God and our neighbour, produces both inward and outward Holiness. This Faith is an Evidence of things not seen; and he that thus believes, is regenerate or born of God. And he has the witness in himself; (call it *Assurance,* or what you please.) The Spirit itself witnesses with his Spirit, that he is a Child of God: 'from what Scripture' every one of these propositions 'is collected,' any common Concordance will shew. 'This is the true portraiture of *Methodism,*' so called. 'A Religion superior to this' (the Love of God and Man) none can 'enjoy,' either in Time or in Eternity.

But the *Methodists* do not hold 'Good Works meritorious.' No; neither does ours, or any other Protestant Church. But mean time they hold, it is their bounden Duty, as they have time, to do Good unto all men; and they know the day is coming wherein God will reward every man according to his Works.

But they 'act with sullenness and sourness, and account innocent Gaiety and Chearfulness a Crime almost as heinous as Sacrilege.' Who does? Name the men. I know them not, and therefore doubt the fact: Tho' it is very possible you account that kind of Gaiety innocent, which I account both foolish and sinful.

I know none who denies, that true Religion, that is Love, the Love of God and our Neighbour, 'elevates our spirits, and renders our minds chearful and serene.' It must, if it be accompanied, as we believe it always is, with Peace and Joy in the Holy Ghost; and if it produces a Conscience void of Offence toward God and toward man.

But they 'preach up Religion only to accomplish a *lucrative* Design, to *fleece* their Hearers, to accumulate *Wealth,* to *rob* and *plunder,* which they esteem meritorious.' We deny the fact. Who is able to prove it? Let the Affirmer produce his Witnesses, or retract.

This is the sum of your Correspondent's Charge, not one article of which can be proved. But whether it can or no, 'we have made them, says he, a theatrical Scoff, and the common Jest and Scorn of every Chorister in the street.' It may be so; but whether you have done well herein, may still admit of a question. However, you cannot but wish, 'we had some formal Court of Judicature erected, (happy Portugal and Spain!) to take cognizance of such matters.' Nay, *cur optas quod habes?* Why do you wish for what you have already? The Court is erected; the holy, devout Playhouse is become *the House of Mercy!* And does take cognizance hereof 'of all Pretenders to Sanctity, and happily furnishes us with a discerning Spirit to distinguish betwixt

Right and Wrong.' But I do not stand to their sentence; I appeal to Scripture and Reason, and by them alone consent to be judged. I am, Sir,

Your humble servant,

JOHN WESLEY.

'Philodemus' replied to Wesley under a different pseudonym ('Somebody') in the next issue, but to small purpose. Wesley wrote further in the issue of November 24-6: nothing was said in this article regarding the theatre or Foote's play. The correspondence, which had now lost sight of the *Minor* altogether, continued December 1-3 (by Wesley), 10-12 (signed E. L., but apparently by the same writer as 'Philodemus' and 'Somebody'), and December 24 (Wesley).

The following hysterical effusion is from the issue of the same periodical of December 10-12.

Semper Ego Auditor *tantum? nunquamne reponam*
Vexatus *toties* impii MINOREIDE F..ti.

SIR,

AS all that is *Christian* within me is alarmed, is grieved, is stirred up at the *unprecedented* insult offered to our Holy Religion—the *fundamental* blessings of the Gospel ridiculed on the Stage! give me leave, through the conveyance of your Paper, to offer one question to the consideration of the Publick.

Supposing then for once (and may pardon be implored for the *Infidel* supposition!) that the great things we are called to, as *Christians,* may be *canvassed*—that the hopes of the Gospel, *'the hopes of Glory,'* the *'means of Grace,'* Unction, (Christianity,) Conviction; that is, a *Sense* of Sin begetting Repentance, Regeneration, New Birth, and its *inseparable* Fruits, a holy Heart, a holy Life, *may* be precarious, or even false; or supposing, that in the *Spirit* thereof, or in *conformity* to the blessed promises of these things in the New Testament, our Church *should* be mistaken in praying for the *'Inspiration* of GOD'S holy Spirit to *cleanse* the affections of our hearts'—'that we may *daily* be *renewed'*—'that GOD'S holy Spirit may direct and rule our hearts'—'that we may bring forth the *fruits of the Spirit'*—'and that God may endue our *gracious Sovereign* with heavenly Gifts'; and *'so* replenish him with the Grace of the holy Spirit, that he may alway incline to his will, and walk in his way'; or

suppose that Scripture and Church *may* possibly be in the *right,* Is it wise? Is it prudent? Is it rational? Is it agreeable to good sense, to run but the *hazard* of provoking GOD, *at this time?* Where is the decency? Where is the judgment? Where is the propriety of thought, to balance (suppose it) but *innocent mirth* against the *probability* of incensing the GOD *of our Salvation,* in so tender a point; *where* his own honour, his truth, his justice, his mercy, his goodness, his *love to mankind,* are concerned! *At this time,* I ask, after *so signal* blessings received for above two years past! AT THIS TIME! when so much is *depending;* when a *fleet,* fitted out at so immense an expence, is just immerging on an *expedition* that *cannot* be a matter of *indifference,* but of the utmost importance, *for* or *against* us! Is *this* our blessing upon, is *this* our *farewell* to, what the nation has had so much at heart for some time past! No, let Mr. F...., and his *judicious* Audience, meet at another place, and *act* more suitably to the present *exigence* of our affairs.

. . . . .

Sir, your's, and yet more,

West-Kent, a Friend to the Public,
Dec. 8, 1760. BEXLEYENSIS.

Whitefield himself never replied to the *Minor.* He makes only one reference to the subject in his published letters, August 15, 1760:

> If we make the Lord Jesus our friend, all will be well. Many here are seeking this friendship. Satan is angry. I am now mimicked and burlesqued upon the public stage. All hail such contempt!

It was rarely Foote, but usually Whitefield who was made the butt of the verse that ran at the heels of this controversy,—such, for example, as this:

LOGICK.

IF, in their *Comical* Dispute,
'Tis evident by *Major* FOOTE,
W....Y the *Minor's* wounded:
Surely there is no man of sense
But clearly sees the consequence?
The Found'ry is confounded.

Hold, not so fast—with both his eyes
SQ...T.M the consequence denies,
And says what sure will please one:
By his own *Feelings* there's no doubt,
But their *Assurance* will hold out
Against all rhime and reason.

Since twenty thousand zealous men,
And to each man good women ten,
Are ready in his cause,
Tho' Canons of the church look big,
For them and Articles a fig,
For Truth, and Peace, and Laws.

OXONIA.[21]

The outcry against the *Minor* must have greatly increased its popularity. One of the writers on Whitefield's side complained that certain ladies were known to purchase tickets for the performance a half dozen nights in succession. It remained one of the most popular of Foote's plays. Fanny Burney was not ashamed of Evelina's taste in enjoying it. '"Come Ladies, where shall we go? For my part, I should like Foote's," . . . No objection being made, to my great relief, we all proceeded to the little theatre in the Haymarket, where I was extremely entertained by the performance of "The Minor and the Commissary." '[22]

At the end of the summer season of 1770, when Foote closed the Haymarket, he went to Edinburgh with Weston and the rest of his company,[23] and the *Minor* was in the *répertoire* offered there. This was in October. Whitefield had died on the thirtieth of September. The first night of the performance in Edinburgh, the theatre was well filled. But on the second, the number of women who attended was only eight, such was the feeling against it. On Saturday, November twenty-fourth, 'a dispute arose among the specta-

[21] *Lloyd's Eve. Post,* Dec. 3-5, 1760.
[22] *Evelina,* Letter XLIV.
[23] *Town and Country* 2. 480.

tors, whether it was proper to bring Mr. *Whitefield* upon the stage, as he was now dead?' The next day the matter was taken up in several pulpits.

The sermon preached by the pastor of the Kirk of Relief is extant. It is entitled the *Theatre Licentious and perverted. Or, a Sermon for Reformation of Manners. Preached on the Lord's day, Dec. 2, 1770. Partly occasioned by the acting of a comedy, entitled the Minor, in the licensed Theatre of Edinburgh, on Saturday, the 24th of November preceding. By James Baine, A.M., Minister of the Gospel at Edinburgh. Inscribed to Samuel Foote, Esq.*[24] Baine believed the outrage against Whitefield to be 'actionable.'

There are extant two replies to this sermon. *An Apology for the Minor in a Letter to the Rev. Mr. Baine. To which is added the Original Epilogue. By Samuel Foote, Esq.* (Edinburgh, 1771), stated that the utility of the *Minor* had been acknowledged by all orders and degrees of men 'with an exception indeed to those subjects who were unhappily tainted with the principles that dramatic piece was intended to combat.' All that Baine says upon the subject, the writer declares, has been said before; and he takes the liberty of 'submitting to the public the objections originally made to the *Minor*' with his answers. What follows is practically a complete reproduction of Foote's *Letter to the Reverend Author of the Christian and Critical Remarks.*

A note at the end of the volume says: 'It is asserted, and with truth, that at the exhibition of the *Minor* in this town, when Mr. Foote was called upon by the public to give them the Epilogue, he apologised for the omission by the application of a law of Solon's to the recent death of the Tottenham-Court preacher;

De mortuis nil nisi bonum.

[24] This volume advertises, 'Just publish'd *Belinda's Account of a Comedy called the Minor,* Price ½d.' I have not seen a copy. Lowe (*Bib. Eng. Theat. Lit.* p. 131) describes it as 'a four-page sheet . . . a furious attack on the Minor.'

But this was rather a condescension to the general prejudice of mankind, than to any conviction of the propriety of the law.'

One signing himself 'Simplex' published a *Letter to Mr. James Baine, Minister in Edinburgh; Occasioned by his Sermon, Intituled The Theatre Licentious and Perverted, or, Strictures upon The Doctrine, lately insisted on against Samuel Foote, Esq; &c. on account of a late Representation of the Comedy, called The Minor, at the Theatre Royal, Edinburgh.* The disciples of Jesus, he says, bore witness to him by sharing his suffering, never by calling for the aid of magistrates and officers of the law. If Christians 'tire of suffering, and call or wish for the aid of any earthly power to protect them from persecution or reproach, they themselves then become evil doers and workers of iniquity.—They by this show their friendship for the world, and their enmity against God.—How vain, how absurd . . . to talk of *magistrates and officers of the law holding the first rank* in standing up for God against the workers of iniquity! and how much still more absurd is it (if possible) to suppose, that *ministers or preachers of national Christianity, or anything like it,* . . . have any concern in this matter.' Christians he says are commanded to be subject to the powers that be and should not, therefore, try to dictate to magistrates. 'It is not the province of a Christian to pretend to set himself up as a *reformer* of the manners of *the public,* in the way of declaiming against any entertainment *legally* authorized (as the *Minor* is) by the government under which he lives.' The reason Christians are not to be 'reformers of the manners of the public' is that Jesus said *My Kingdom is not of this world.* 'I do, for my own part, without the smallest hesitation, declare,' says the writer, 'that I consider Mr. *Whitefield's* notion of regeneration, which I have heard as well as that of Messrs. *Walker and Erskine, D.D.* to be equally blasphemous (according to the plain and obvious meaning of the Scriptures on that point), with any one thing said in the *Minor.*' The last

paragraph of the pamphlet attempts to answer a sermon by Hayward, and makes reference to other supporters of the Methodist side,—Belinda, Anti-Prophanus, and the divines, Walker and Erskine.

The unfairness of Foote's portrayal could not fail to bind the more closely to Whitefield many who felt him to be maligned. On the other hand, a writer in the *Monthly Mirror*[25] expressed no uncommon view when he asserted that, 'true religion can suffer no injury from the ridicule of such a mountebank as George Whitefield.' But even if Whitefield had been such a mountebank, the fact remains that, as Genest, who admired the play and roundly berated the Irish for their cold reception of it, says, 'It is no easy matter to ridicule the pretenders to religion without ridiculing religion itself—Foote was not altogether equal to this—it is to be regretted that he has put into the mouth of Mrs. Cole a sentiment which might be delivered from any pulpit with the utmost propriety.'[26] The *Thespian Magazine* said in 1793, 'Foote's *Mother Cole,* we sincerely believe, has been of great dis-service to the interests of religion.'[27] The significance of the *Minor* is certainly by no means inconsiderable in the early history of one of the most powerful branches of the present Christian church. It was the centre of one campaign in the paper war waged about Methodism. The farces, mock-epics, novelettes, doggerels, letters, and articles that attacked the sect during the years of Whitefield's life subsequent to 1760 and even during a short period after his death, can in large measure be laid to Samuel Foote.

[25] N. S. 3. 317-8.

[26] Genest 4. 599. Genest thought it 'not possible to conceive a character more truly comic than Mrs. Cole.'

[27] 2. 162.

CHAPTER IV

From the *Minor* to Foote's Accident. The *Liar*, the *Orators*, the *Trial of Samuel Foote*, the *Mayor of Garratt*, the *Patron*, the *Commissary*

It was January, 1762, before Foote had anything new on the boards. On the twelfth of the month he acted the title rôle in the *Liar*, at Covent Garden. The play is an adaptation of Corneille's *Menteur*. Young Wilding, an Oxford lad, has come to London for a good time, which he intends to get by means of his talent for lying and with the assistance of his valet, Papillon, an Englishman masquerading as a French marquis. He seizes an opportunity to introduce himself to a handsome young woman in the park by picking up her handkerchief. Although he has never seen her before, he tells her that she has been the object of his devotion for an entire year. There is a slight slip in his inquiring the residence of the young lady at whose portal he has stood sentinel so long, but he has no doubt of coming off safely with such information as Papillon can get from her footman. After parting from her, he meets Sir James Elliot, who tells him of a gorgeous affair the previous evening on the Thames. 'And don't you know who gave it?' says the Liar. 'Ha, ha, it was me.' Papillon meanwhile has been told by a footman that the divinity of the park is a Miss Godfrey, a mistake, for he has confused her with her companion—her name is Grantam. Young Wilding sends a declaration of love to Miss Godfrey. Miss Grantam, it seems, is betrothed to Sir James, and he now breaks with her because of her alleged part in the Thames escapade implied in the Liar's story, of which she, of course, knows nothing. Meantime, Wilding senior makes overtures to her on behalf of his son. When the Liar learns this, ignorant that she is his flame of the park, he launches whole armaments of lies, including the statement

that he is already married. These lies combined with the mistake about the identity of the two girls, are the motives of the entire action, which finally results in the frustration of his hopes. Miss Grantam is united to her old lover, Sir James, and the reader suspects that in time Young Wilding will court Miss Godfrey, who plainly would not object.

The *Liar* was performed only four times its first season,[1] but Foote brought it out at the Haymarket in the summer with better success. In the end, however, it had a longer stage career than any of his other plays. It has been acted in London as recently as 1896—at the Royalty Theatre. Its survival is explained in part, at least, by the fact that no vital element in the plot depended upon the recognition of personal portraiture.

There were, however, a few allusions. There is a lengthy criticism of the *Monthly Review,* with a probable reference to Goldsmith's quarrel with the Griffiths,[2] of which Foote must certainly have heard by this time. (Perhaps with the intention of implying its innocence, the *Monthly Review* quoted this very passage with some small pleasantries in its review[3] of the published play.) There seems to be an allusion also to the actor Love, who stood in such fear of disgracing his family by his profession that he changed his name, a procedure which was not customary among actors in the eighteenth century. His real name was James Dance. He was a brother of Nathaniel Dance, afterwards Sir Nathaniel Dance-Holland, and George Dance, R.A., who, ironically enough, are now chiefly remembered for their portraits of actors—their brother's associates.

Baker, writing in 1879, says that 'a few years back [the *Liar*] formed the principal attraction at the Olympic for more than one hundred nights'[4] The version was presumably that prepared for his own use by Charles James

[1] Jan. 12, 13, 20, 22, 1762.
[2] See Badcock 2. 79-80.
[3] 31. 153.
[4] *Eng. Actors* 1. 244.

Mathews when he revived it there March 9, 1867. Practically every word of the dialogue is retained as originally written by Foote, but his numerous changes of scene have been reduced, so that the play, though of its original length, is divided into two, instead of three, acts. 'The character of Miss Godfrey,' says the reviser, 'in the original a sentimental serious young lady—I have changed into a frumpish old maid, which makes her squabbles with Miss Grantam more comic, and enhances the situation in the second act, when she is to the dismay of Young Wilding, presented to him as his chosen wife.' This does not involve changes in dialogue. One character (Kitty) is omitted. Mathews also added a stagey conclusion, which is not an improvement. The *Biographia Dramatica*[5] speaks of the *Liar's* being reduced to a farce and frequently acted in that form. I presume the reference is to the two act edition. A copy entitled the *Lyar, a Farce in two Acts . . . Correctly given as performed at the Theatres Royal* (1824) shows that this was really no more farcical than the original. It differs from it only in the omission of rather unimportant speeches. Even the scenes remain the same.

The *Liar,* like the *Knights* and the *Minor* and certain of Foote's later plays, was made the means of selling the work of some other author who dared not depend on himself. The *Lyar,* a comedy in three acts (1763), is described in the *Biographia Dramatica,*[6] as 'a catch penny, intended to be imposed on the public for Mr. Foote's play of the same name.'

Perhaps the small success of the *Liar* during its first season put its author in mind to return to his mimicries, for his next work, the *Orators,* was full of them. The main target was Thomas Sheridan, who was then devoting his energies to the teaching of elocution in London. This was a fad at the time. 'The present fashionable taste for oratory' is the subject of a long complaint by an anonymous writer in *Lloyd's*

[5] 2. 402. [6] 2. 401.

Evening Post, who declared that attendants upon Mr. Sheridan's lectures fancied 'a right Elocution' would cure all the ills of venality in public as well as private life.[7] A reviewer of Sheridan's book said, 'One would imagine that he considers elocution as the consummation of all earthly perfection, and that even the virtues of the heart depend, in a great measure, on the utterance of the tongue and the gesticulations of the body.'[8]

Foote loved to imitate orators: the reader will remember the Chevalier Taylor, Henley, Cock, Langford, Macklin, and Whitefield. Sheridan was just the man for him. He knew him intimately from acting under his management in the Dublin theatre. In fact, he had already made him the sport of the public in the *Diversions*.

The *Orators* was at first no drama at all. It was originally advertised as a *Course of Comic Lectures on English Oratory*, and described as follows:

> Oratory in general. 2. Its Utility demonstration [*sic*] from its Universality. 3. Distinct Species of Oratory. 4. The present Practice of Oratory peculiar to the English. 5. Necessity of an Academy for the Promulgation and Inculcation of modern Oratory. 6. The Propriety of appointing the Author perpetual Professor. The whole to be illustrated in apt Instances by a Set of Pupils long trained in the Art, one of which is an amazing Proof of the Force of Genius when properly cultivated.[9]

The hour was set at noon in imitation of Sheridan.

As was frequently the case, Foote improved the work as he went along. On May 12, 1762, he announced that his lecture was postponed 'in order to prepare the Pupils for an Exhibition in some particular Branches of Oratory not yet touched upon.' This must have been when he added the second act. The first act is chiefly the lecture of which the outline has been given. It is on the whole excessively

[7] 10. 322-3. See also 10. 46.
[8] *Crit. Rev.* 14. 161.
[9] *Pub. Ad.*, April 30, 1762, and subsequent issues.

tedious. When the pointedness of delivering the lecture at noon had worn off, Foote was 'particularly desired'—by himself, no doubt, like other managers—to remove to the regular evening hour. The name now becomes the *Orators*. Act II is the trial of Fanny Phantom, the Cock Lane Ghost,[10] conducted by Foote's pupils as a sample of court-room oratory. The counsel for the defence moves to quash the indictment unless a jury of ghosts be obtained, on the ground that every criminal has a right to be tried by his peers, but it is decided that Fanny has forfeited this privilege by her scratchings, knockings, and flutterings, which are operations peculiar to flesh and blood. The first witness called is Shadrach Bodkin, 'a teacher of the word and a tailor.' The satire on Methodism is as severe as that in the *Minor*, yet quite new.

It will be recalled that Foote had intended to introduce Dr. Johnson into this play, and learning of the imprudence of such a move, substituted George Faulkner, the Dublin printer. Among the witnesses at Fanny's trial, Faulkner comes hobbling in as Peter Paragraph, avid of the chance to talk about himself, his paper, his artistocratic friends, his charm with the ladies. In justification of the caricature it is said that Faulkner was so vain of his gallantries that he even boasted that the injury necessitating the amputation of his leg, happened in his escape from a jealous husband.[11] Perhaps his self-importance explains also his strange behavior later on in actually publishing[12] Foote's play. He is reported to have made large profits from it.

Emboldened by Faulkner's apparent indifference, Foote took his comedy to the printer's very door-step, and adver-

[10] For the Cock Lane Ghost see *Cock Lane and Common Sense*, Andrew Lang, pp. 161-79. Contemporary references: *Lloyd's Eve. Post*, 1762, pp. 73, 74, 77, 89, 102, 118, 134, 157, 163, 186, 196, 249; *Gent. Mag.* 32. 43 and 81-4.

[11] Richard Cumberland, *Mem.* (1806), p. 117.

[12] See Wilkinson's note to his edition of the *Trial of Samuel Foote* in his *Wandering Patentee*.

tised it for the Smock Alley Theatre in Dublin. Some time prior to this, Lord Chesterfield, writing to Faulkner, had mentioned the *Orators* with the suggestion, 'As the government here cannot properly take notice of it, would it be amiss that you should show some spirit upon this occasion, either by way of stricture, contempt, or by bringing an action against him?' He offered to execute any orders Faulkner might think fit to send him, 'as to retaining counsel, filing a bill of Faulkner *versus* Foote, or bringing a common action upon the case.'[13] Faulkner took his advice seriously, and he seems to have made some threats before the first performance of the play in Dublin.

The theatre that night was crowded with the rival supporters of the two men, 'prepared for anarchy and uproar.' The reporter says:

> When Peter Paragraph was called upon to give evidence on the mock trial in the Orators, no Peter appeared—he was called again, but the second had no more effect than the first. It was then thought, that George's threats had intimidated Foote from performing; and the audience (according as they were influenced by party) were ready to break out into murmurs or triumph, just as a third summons brought the *figure* before them—there was such a striking resemblance in the person, and so laughable an extravagance of the manners of Falkner, that, before the opposers could settle themselves for an opposition, Peter got sufficient time to apologize to the court for his absence, by assuring them that he had been detained at his lawyer's, in giving instructions to bring an action against a rascally fellow, one Foote, who, by a *vile* imitation of his voice and figure, had brought him on the public stage.[14]

Foote's impersonation must have been very realistic if the story Henry Crabb Robinson tells is true. Robinson says that Faulkner tried the device of getting the play hissed off the stage by a crowd of ragamuffins whom he supplied with a good meal, a shilling apiece, and the promise of more on the morrow, provided they attended the play and hissed the player. Off had gone the ragged troupe, but Faulkner heard that the

[13] *Letters* 3. 1277-8.

[14] *Pub. Ad.*, March 1, 1763.

farce was received with more applause than ever. In the morning the urchins appeared for the reward, and to the reproach of treachery, their spokesman said, 'Plase yer honor, we did all we could, for the actor-man had heard of us, and did not come on at all, at all. And so we had nobody to hiss. But when we saw yer honor's own dear self come on, we did clap, indeed we did, and showed you all the respect and honor in our power. And so yer honor won't forget us because yer's honor's enemy was afraid to come and left yer honor to yer own dear self.'[15]

Faulkner, like Apreece, was soon unable to walk the streets without being pointed at. Then he brought action against Foote. Foote managed to have the trial deferred and was released on £400 bail. But an injunction was laid against him, prohibiting his acting the *Orators* in the meantime. This he disobeyed and 'not only most daringly performed the *Orators* several times since, but wrote and spoke a poetical address[16] in which with greater wit than discretion he exposed George more than ever,' says the *Advertiser*.[17] 'From the obvious sentiments of the court before, and this additional contempt thereto, it is now the general opinion . . . that he will be heavily fined, and sentenced either to the pillory or a public whipping. However, as he has no little interest with the great, it is thought the latter part of it may be mitigated to a severe reproof.' Foote jumped his bail and left the city, but, though it was reported otherwise, he afterwards reimbursed those who had given bonds for him.[18] The damages he had to pay Faulkner were so heavy that they exhausted the profits of his successful season in Dublin.[19]

[15] *Reminiscences* 1. chap. 14.

[16] *Mr. Foote's Address to the Public. After the Prosecution against him for a Libel,* printed *Pub. Ad.,* Jan. 28, 1763; *Gent. Mag.* 33. 39. Foote calls himself Aristophanes in this address.

[17] Article cited above.

[18] *Gent. Mag.* 47. 536-7.

[19] See *D. N. B.* under Faulkner; and *Gent. Mag.* 33. 45.

Lord Chesterfield wrote immediately to congratulate the publisher upon making his enemy his '*Foot*-stool—a victory which,' said he, 'the divine Socrates had not influence enough to obtain at Athens over Aristophanes nor the great Pompey at Rome, over the actor who had the insolence to abuse him under the name of Magnus.'[20] But to the Bishop of Waterford Chesterfield observed that he would rather have expected a noble contempt, than a legal process from his 'philosophical friend.' 'Socrates,' said he, 'never prosecuted Aristophanes for having attempted to ridicule him.'[21]

The third act of the *Orators* satirized the Robin Hood Society, a debating club which remains famous for Goldsmith's membership and 'as the scene of Burke's earliest eloquence.'[22] In satirizing the club, Foote seems to be following a well-established tradition, for it was often satirized in the papers;[23] Murphy wrote two sharp attacks on it for his *Gray's-Inn Journal*,[24] and the contemporary pamphleteer did not neglect it.[25]

Foote would as soon mimic himself as anybody else. This is the way he contrived to get the last word with Faulkner: the next time he played the *Orators* in London, May 18, 1763, at the Haymarket, he added an act entitled the *Trial of Samuel Foote, Esq. for a Libel on Peter Paragraph.* It is included in Badcock's edition of the works, and in Wilkinson's *Wandering Patentee.* Foote impersonated himself and also one of the judges in his trial in Dublin. The end of

[20] *Letters* 3. 1287.
[21] *Ibid.* 3. 1288.
[22] See John Timbs, a *Century of Anecdote,* p. 148.
[23] E.g., *Pub. Ad.,* Jan. 23, 1770.
[24] Collected ed. 1. 117-22, and 2. 161-7.
[25] E.g., *The Robin Hood Society: a Satire. With Notes Variorum, (adorned with a Frontispiece, representing the Society in Debate).* This is advertised on the last page of the *Spouting Club: A Mock Heroic, Comico, Farcico, Tragico, Burlesque Poem. By the Author of the Robin Hood Society.*

it was, of course, that the defendant was ordered to drop all proceedings against Peter Paragraph. The scene concluded with Foote's stating that he had 'thrown a few couplets together' and inquiring the judge's opinion as to whether he 'could speak them with safety.' He then repeated some verses entitled *Mr. Foote's Address to the Public.*

Foote's new work the next year (1763) was the *Mayor of Garratt,* a two-act farce based on the mock election that used to be held periodically in the hamlet of that name, situated between Wandsworth and Tooting in Surrey. This odd celebration had its origin early in the century, when the inhabitants of Garret[26] finding their rights in a certain small common encroached upon, met in conclave, elected a president, under his leadership set up a resistance, and regained their privileges. As this happened at the time of a general election, it was decided that their president, or mayor, should hold office during the existing parliament, and stand for re-election with the new one. Eventually, the grotesque pomposities of the Garret election were turned to the uses of parody as party spirit ran high in the great world outside, and developed into a celebration attended by crowds from London and subsidized by the innkeepers of all the neighboring hamlets. More than a hundred thousand persons are said to have assembled for one of these elections. The earliest of which candidates' names are known, was in 1747; the last in 1796. There was an unsuccessful attempt at revival in 1826.[27]

Foote was there in 1761, and paid nine guineas for the

[26] The proper present spelling.

[27] There is a good account of the Garret elections in the *Book of Days* ed. R. Chambers (1863), 1. 659-64. This includes reprints of three drawings by Valentine Green, delineating the chief features of the election. See also *Curiosities of Biography,* Glasgow, 1845, pp. 281-2. There is an edition of the *Mayor of Garratt* 'with a history of the mock election formerly held there. Illustrated with Designs by R. Seymour.'

room opposite Wandsworth church, from which he and his friends watched the proceedings. The candidates for office, Lord Twankum, Lord Lapstone, Kit Noisy, Lords Wedge and Paxford, Sir John Crambo, and Beau Silvester, bespattered each other in handbills after the manner of their betters in the national government. It is alleged that some of their addresses were written by Foote, Garrick, and Wilkes.

Foote's farce represents the election and introduces a love intrigue between Major Sturgeon of the militia and the wife of Jerry Sneak, the dark-horse who is made mayor—a plot, slight as it is, more in the Restoration spirit than any other in Foote's work. The assignation is carried to the disgusting lengths of Wycherley or Shadwell.

This comedy was put upon the Haymarket stage the second summer that the *Orators* was playing there. Foote, it seems, was not yet done with Thomas Sheridan: he was now burlesquing him in two plays of an evening, day after day. In the *Mayor of Garratt* he is easily recognized as Peter Primer,[28] the school-master, candidate for the mayoralty. He loses the election because Phil Fleam has told the electors that he is an Irishman and none of them will vote for a foreigner.

Peter Primer's most considerable rival is Matthew Mug, 'a damned palavering fellow,' who walks around absently among the electors with well-meant inquiries about their relatives who are dead or never were born, and makes many offers that he can never fulfill. He is greatly surprised when he gets ousted for attempting to bribe the returning officer, for Garret is the first borough he has ever heard of which was lost by the returning officer's refusing a bribe. The character of Matthew Mug was perhaps suggested to Foote by the Garret candidate who bore the pseudonym of Beau Silvester; but audiences detected a resemblance to the

[28] See Wilkinson, *Mem.* 3. 151.

recently retired first lord of the treasury, the Duke of Newcastle, a politician best remembered to-day by the notorious fact that he knew better than any one else in his time the price of every member of Parliament. 'His confused, tangled, unconnected talk,' says Lecky,[29] 'his fulsome flattery, his promises made at the spur of the moment and almost instantly forgotten, his childish exhibitions of timidity, ignorance, fretfulness, and perplexity, the miserable humiliation to which he stooped rather than abandon office, his personal oddities, and his utter want of all dignity and self-control made him at once one of the most singular and most contemptible figures of his time.' The ridicule of Newcastle in the *Mayor of Garratt* was well known. Cradock, after meeting him on the Continent one day in 1764, wrote one of his friends: 'It was unaccountable to me that so much as he had been ridiculed by Foote, on the stage, that he could not restrain himself, even in the street, from seizing your head and holding it between his hands, whilst perhaps he would ask the most unmeaning and trifling questions.'[30]

Several of the subsidiary characters in the election scene have their originals in the real hamlet of Garret. Foote's Crispin Heel-tap, the returning officer, was probably a shoemaker who came forward as a candidate with the title of Lord Lapstone; and Snuffle, the sexton, John Gardiner, cobbler of Wandsworth and parish grave-digger, who assumed the name of Lord Twankum;[31] Kit Noisy, a waterman named John Beacham. Major Sturgeon was another portrait. The name was evidently meant to jog the intelligence of any who did not recognize the character as that of the ex-militia

[29] *Hist. of Eng. in the Eighteenth Century* 2. 8.

[30] *Mem.* 4. 118.

[31] The use that was made of the Garret personalities and later, also of the characters in Foote's play, is illustrated in the *Public Advertiser* of Nov. 3, 1769, and May 16, 1770.

officer of Acton, Justice Lamb, a fish salesman. Some of Foote's friends feared he would get into trouble by attacking the militia. But 'against this objection,' says Cooke, 'he had defended himself by selecting such *outré* characters as militiamen themselves would join in ridiculing; and when a simple fishmonger was exhibited with the rank of a major, aping all the gallantries of a lover and a hero, the laugh was universal, and the comedy met with a success much superior to any of his former.'[32] Once, however, a riot was induced by Wilkinson, and he stood in some real danger for acting Sturgeon in the presence of some militia officers at Shrewsbury.[33]

Among the incidental items of satire, the quack doctor, Rock, previously brought into Foote's *Inquisition,* was here referred to by name along with several others of his profession (West, Cleland, Walker, Stevens, the Chevalier Taylor) whose advertisements may still be seen in the papers preserved from that time.[34] The part of Jerry Sneak, the hen-pecked husband, one of Foote's best characters, was written for the actor Weston, who was unrivaled in low comedy. He could look the fool more naturally than any other actor on record. It was Foote who first recognized his merits when he played the insignificant rôle of Dick in the *Minor,* and after the *Mayor of Garratt,* he continued to be one of Foote's principal performers. Hugh Kelly says of him:

> In those still scenes of *scarce existing* life,
> Where *Sneak* breathes only to obey a wife;
> Or where poor *Drugger* publicly display'd,
> Hangs out the mere dull animal of trade;
> There *Weston's* worth with certainty may rest,
> Nor fear the strictest rigidness of test;
> There a sublime stupidity of face,
> As dead to sense as destitute of grace,
> A fix'd, relaxless vacancy of lines,

[32] *Foote* 1. 123.
[33] *Mem.* 3. 165-70.
[34] E.g. *Pub. Ad.,* Oct. 18, 1769 ff.

> With such true genius generally shines,
> That quite surpriz'd, though satisfied we gaze,
> And all is mirth, abandonment, and praise.[35]

The *Mayor of Garratt* was a general favorite for many years. The latest production of which I have a record was at the Haymarket in 1824.

Foote's next play, the *Patron,* returned to the subject he had presented with such success in the *Author,* but though considered by himself the best thing he had yet done,[36] it did not meet with the same favor as its recent predecessors. Nearly all the objects of its satire had either been already treated by him, or were to receive fuller study in later plays; 'the frivolity and ignorance of the pretenders to learning, with the insolence and vanity of their superficial, illiberal protectors,'[37] the abuses of publishers and booksellers, the literary hack, the quack doctor, the antiquarian. The plot was drawn from one of Marmontel's *Contes Moraux, le Connaisseur.* A certain vain, would-be Maecenas persuades a young aspirant to assume the authorship of a play of his own which is to be produced at a Paris theatre. The play is damned. The connoisseur's only escape from exposure by the young fellow he has made use of, is to give him the hand of his niece, although she has been practically contracted to an old mummy of an antiquarian, who loves her for having a nose like the empress Poppaea. Foote keeps very close to his original in all the actions and motives of the story and even in certain speeches.

As usual, he had a source also in life. The summer that he and Murphy had the lease of Drury Lane, they had produced a comedy, previously declined by Garrick, called

[35] *Thespis,* Bk. 1, p. 360. On Weston see Cooke, *Foote* 1. 126-35; Thomas Holcroft, *Theatrical Recorder* 2. 112-24; *Memoirs of Thomas Weston* (1796).

[36] Prefatory letter.

[37] *Ibid.*

Wishes, or Harlequin's Mouth Opened, by Thomas Bentley, son of the celebrated scholar. Lord Melcombe's interest had been solicited in behalf of the play and he had used his influence to bespeak a brilliant house. There had been a rehearsal at his villa by the cast, including Foote,[38] who were to give it at Drury Lane. The dialogue was brilliant, but the catastrophe out of taste. The author himself, sitting at the Drury Lane performance by Cumberland, his nephew, whispered, 'If they don't damn this, they deserve to be damn'd themselves.' 'Whilst he was yet speaking,' says Cumberland, 'the roar began, and *The Wishes* were irrevocably damned . . . . Upon the hint of this play,' he concludes, 'and the entertainment at La Trappe, where Foote had been a guest, that wicked wit took measure of the host, and founded his satirical drama of *The Patron*—in short he feasted, flattered and lampooned.'[39]

The object of the satire, George Bubb Dodington, Lord Melcombe, loved to believe himself the Maecenas of letters, though he chose for the objects of his patronage such mediocrities as Paul Whitehead. Being an expeditious turn-coat, he held, one after another, a number of fine offices at court, and he was also honored by literary men. Young, Thomson, and Fielding were only a few of those who wrote dedications to him. Churchill, on the other hand, satirized him under the name of Bubo—but Churchill satirized everybody. Nearly a hundred and twenty-five years after his death Robert Browning wrote

> . . . . . folk see but one
> Fool more, as well as knave, in Dodington.[40]

But Dodington was not a figure with the populace, and that,

[38] He acted Distress, a poet. See Davies, *Garrick* 1. 349-52 for account of the play.

[39] Richard Cumberland, *Mem.*, pp. 108-9. There is a graphic description of Dodington, pp. 93-9.

[40] *Parleyings with Certain People.*

perhaps, accounted for the general indifference to this comedy, in which he was the chief person caricatured. Moreover, when the play came out, he had been dead two years—and, with the populace, out of sight is out of mind.

This was, of course, not the only caricature in the *Patron*. Sir Peter Pepperpot, an irascible West Indian, is not needed for the plot: he must be there for some personal reason. And there is an equally obvious portrait in Mr. Puff, a publisher and a medical quack. The Society of Antiquarians, which had at this time but recently received its charter, is brought in through Rust, the heroine's unsuccessful suitor. But the most effective allusion in the play must have been the reference to the rescue by Wilkites of the *North Briton No. 45* from the flames to which it had been consigned by the public hangman on the third of December previous in front of the Royal Exchange. The incident is touched as follows: Rust, the antiquarian, has suffered an accident to one of his precious relics. 'But I have this day,' he says, 'acquired a treasure that will, in some measure, make me amends.'

> Sir Tho. Indeed! what can that be?
>
> Puff. That must be something curious, indeed.
>
> Rust. It has cost me infinite trouble to get it.
>
> Dac. Great rarities are not had without pains.
>
> Rust. It is three months ago since I got the first scent of it and I have been ever since on the hunt; but all to no purpose.
>
> Sir Tho. I am quite upon thorns till I see it.
>
> Rust. And yesterday, when I had given it over, when all my hopes were grown desperate, it fell into my hands, by the most unexpected and wonderful accident . . . . I have brought it here in my pocket; I am no churl; I love to pleasure my friends.
>
> Sir Tho. You are, Mr. Rust, extremely obliging.
>
> All. Very kind, very obliging indeed.
>
> Rust. It was not much hurt by the fire.
>
> Sir Tho. Very fortunate.
>
> Rust. The edges are soiled by the link; but many of the letters are exceedingly legible.
>
> Sir Rog. A li-ttle roo-m, if you p-lease.
>
> Rust. Here it is; the precious remains of the very *North Briton* that was burnt at the Royal Exchange.

Sir Tho. Number forty-five?

Rust. The same.

Bev. You are a lucky man, Mr. Rust.

Rust. I think so. But, Gentlemen, I hope I need not give you a caution: hush—silence—no words on this matter.

Dac. You may depend upon us.

Rust. For, as the paper has not suffered the law, I don't know whether they may not seize it again.

The *Patron* was published when first put upon the stage by the author's own authority,[41] with a dedicatory letter to Lord Gower, then Lord Chamberlain.

It was about a year later that Foote's next work came out. For the material of this, too, he was indebted to France—to Molière and d' Ancourt. But that interested nobody so much as its sources in London life. 'Mr. Foote has brought forth a new piece,' wrote Mrs. Skrymsher to Cradock, 'the title "The Commissary," intended to ridicule Taylor the broken silversmith, &c. &c., who have, at the expence of your land-tax-paying country-gentlemen, acquired their thousands. I have not seen it, but hear there is humour in it; but I question whether it would divert me, for I shall be thinking all the while that it is a melancholy truth, these fellows have, in fact, picked our pockets, and even the widow's mite is among their immense plunder.'[42] The Treaty of Paris, signed about a year and a half before this, had let loose a horde of commissaries and army contractors, who during the Seven Years' War had been piling up wealth upon which they now thought to mount into society, though in their boorishness they were in no wise fitted for it.

Zachary Fungus is the Commissary. His laborious attempts to learn all the fine arts in a minute and his contempt for his honest brother, the tallow-chandler, are none the worse for their reminiscences of that comical *bourgeois,* M. Jourdain. 'You'll pardon me,' he says, to one of his teachers, 'for as I want to be a *finished gentleman* as soon as I can, it

[41] *Pub. Ad.,* June 22, 1764.

[42] Joseph Cradock, *Mem.* 4. 119.

is impossible for me to stick long to any one thing,' and off he hastens to learn something else. His prototype was Peter Taylor of Portsmouth. His brother Isaac is intended as a portrait of Peter Taylor's son, Robert Paris Taylor.

Two of Zach Fungus's instructors were also drawn from life. Catgut, the singing master turned poet, was intended for Thomas Augustine Arne, the composer. In appearance he was somewhat grotesque. Foote had the luck one day to stumble upon a man in the street who was his precise double. He engaged him upon the spot and somehow got hold of some old clothes of the doctor's and one of his cast-off wigs; and when the fellow appeared upon the stage accoutred in these, people almost believed it was Arne himself.[43] Arne had a great and well-deserved reputation as a teacher of singing as well as for his many musical compositions, and was the author of numerous detached songs, operas, and oratorios; but the librettos which he was fond of writing for his music were poor. This was his vulnerable point to Foote. He represents him as having left off music for the pursuit of poetry, at which he is inane.

Unless Foote knew more about Dr. Arne's personal morals than the latter's biographers care to divulge, he grossly maligned him in the part he makes him play. A contemporary, however, made this statement, which seems to support Foote's representation: 'Dr. Catgut's scene with Mrs. Mechlin, paints in strong colours, the absurdities of a man whose genius will be long admired, but whose conduct has much obscured it with a cloud of indiscretions, to give them no worse a title.'[44] Dibdin, on the other hand, who was personally acquainted with him, says, 'He had no radical fault in the world; but his mind was weak, and he was perpetually imposed upon.'[45]

The Commissary's teacher of Oratory, Mr. Gruel, must be

[43] Cradock, *Mem.* 1. 33.
[44] *Dramatic Censor* 1. 306.
[45] *Hist. of the Eng. Stage* 5. 246, n.

Foote's inveterately hounded victim, Thomas Sheridan, 'the famous orationer that has published the book.'

> Z. Fun. His knowledge is wonderful; he has told me such secrets—Why, do you know, Isaac, by what means 'tis we speak?
> I. Fun. Speak! why we speak with our mouths.
> Z. Fun. No, we don't.
> I. Fun. No!
> Z. Fun. No. He says, we speak by means of the tongue, the teeth, and the throat; and without them we should only bellow.

None of the writers whom I have consulted name Sheridan in this connection. But they make such observations as the following:—'There are two pictures professedly copied from a couple of honest gentlemen of very whimsical estimation in this metropolis; namely, Doctor *Catgut,* who informs the audience he has lately turned poet; and Mr. *Gruel,* the Orator, who teaches the true pronounciation of the *English* language.'[46]

At last Sheridan seems to have taken action, after Foote had held him steadily up to ridicule for a number of years. I find this note in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for June, 1765:

> Monday 10.
> At the little Theatre in the *Hay-Market,* Mr. *Foote* received a letter threatening a prosecution, from the person's attorney, who in the new piece of *The Commissary* is supposed to be characterized under the title of *Gruel the Orator.*

But I do not know that anything ever came of this.

The period covered by the foregoing chapter was prolific. Foote had written and produced five full length plays and a sketch between January, 1762, and June, 1765. The following February his accident occurred. After that such energy as he could gather had to be expended in the management of his theatrical company; and the year 1766 was therefore one of literary inactivity. In 1767 he produced nothing except the *Occasional Prelude* written for the opening of the Haymarket when he became patentee.

[46] *Gent. Mag.* 35. 254.

CHAPTER V

Plays Written under the Shadow of the Accident
The *Devil upon Two Sticks*, the *Lame Lover*, and Some Small Pieces

It is clear, I think, that Foote's productions in 1768 and 1770 took their character from his physical disability. Both the *Devil Upon Two Sticks* and the *Lame Lover* are obviously written with a view to the necessities of a star performer with a cork leg.

The first of these is based on Le Sage's *Diable Boiteux*. Cradock complains in his *Memoirs* that he had suggested Le Sage's book to Foote as 'a good subject for stage buffoonery.' He thought that 'from the story of the "Power of Friendship," which was introduced in it, something might be well extracted for a serious opera. Foote admitted the latter, but spoke with the utmost contempt of the former; "it was," he urged, "without exception, the most absurd and nonsensical vehicle that could have been devised"; however, no more was ever heard of the "Power of Friendship," and the "Devil upon two Sticks" was produced at his own summer theatre, where he himself was the hero.'[1] He was content to retain the precise title used in the English translation of Le Sage, a title that had already been attached to a ballad farce produced at Drury Lane in 1729. The main debt Foote owes to his source is the environing action. To meet the taste of a popular audience, in the place of the young man to whom Le Sage's Devil shows the city, Foote substitutes an eloping couple, Harriet, daughter of an English consul in Madrid, and Invoice, a clerk. This enables him to start out with a mock sentimental episode in the *Polly Honeycomb* style. Perhaps he also enjoyed a sly glance at the popular

[1] I. 31-2.

bottle-conjuror's tricks in the scene where Invoice lets the Devil out of the chemist's phial.

The picture of Harriet's home is somewhat suggestive of Sophia Western's, but her Republican aunt, Mrs. Margaret Maxwell, had a live prototype instantly recognized in London. 'I go to town tomorrow,' wrote Walpole, 'to see *The Devil upon Two Sticks,* as I did last week, but could not get in. I have now secured a place in my niece Cholmondeley's box, and am to have the additional entertainment of Mrs. Macaulay in the same company; who goes to see herself represented, and I suppose figures herself very like Socrates.' For all his bantering tone, Walpole—and his contemporaries in general—respected this 'female' historian. His opinion that her history of England was 'the most sensible, unaffected and best . . . that we have had yet,'[2] was corroborated by Gray. Volume four had come out the previous year, and she was now presenting her eager readers with the fifth. The third had been the object of a panegyric by Pitt in the House of Commons.

Ever since his earliest performances Foote had been heckling medical quacks: now he subjects the whole profession to the lash. The form of his castigation was suggested by a recent dispute between the fellows and licentiates of the College of Physicians. The licentiates had forced their way in a body into the room where the comitia of the college was sitting. The president, Sir William Browne, dismissed the comitia; but he stood in such fear of a repetition of the occurrence that he resigned his office, not caring, he said, to remain and be beaten by the licentiates. That was in 1766. In 1767 another attempt was made, but without success, because the precaution had been taken of securing the iron gates at the entrance. The licentiates offered a smith ten

[2] *Letters* 7. 199. On Mrs. Macaulay see *Town and Country* 1. 91-2. The same magazine gives a portrait and write-up in one of its 'Tête-à-Têtes' (8. 675-8).

guineas and an indemnification of three hundred pounds to force the gates, but without avail. Bonnell Thornton wrote up the quarrel in a mock-epic *Battle of the Wigs,* which he called an *Additional Canto* to Dr. Garth's poem of the *Dispensary.* From this Foote may have taken hints for the battle in the third act of the *Devil upon Two Sticks.*

Sir William Browne was a man of no discretion and utterly unfit to deal with a situation like that just described. He was an energetic defender of the exclusive privileges of the universities and had written a pamphlet in the controversy with Dr. Isaac Schomberg of the precise sort to give offence to the licentiates. His pedantry and eccentricity were famous. In Foote's comedy he is Hellebore, president of the College. This character (as well as the lame Devil) the author designed for his own acting. His device was ingenious, considering the difficulty he was under with his wooden leg of impersonating a well-known living man of remarkably upright figure. Hellebore appears not in his own person, but as impersonated by the Devil. Sir William took no offence, though Foote dressed the part with such exactness that his odd figure was easily recognized. His good temper was famous. He sent Foote his own muff that nothing need be lacking, he said, to so excellent a portrait.[3]

There was still a third character whom Foote acted in this play.

> You may see it is Dr. Squib, by his shuffle.
> What, I suppose now he is scouring away for the college.
> Who? Squib? how little you know of him! he did not care if all our tribe was tipped into the Thames.
> No?
> No! Lord help you! he is too much taken up with the national

[3] J. Nichols, *Lit. Anec.* 3. 326, n. Nichols gives a full account of him, pp. 315-31. See also Wm. Munk, the *Roll of the Royal College of Physicians of London* (1878) 2. 95-105. There is a full length portrait of Browne at the College presented by himself in the second year of his presidency.

> illness to attend to particular ails. Why, he would quit the best patient in town, to hunt after a political secret; and would rather have a whisper from a great man in the Court of Requests, than five hundred pounds for attending him in a chronical case.

This was meant to describe Dr. Richard Brocklesby, but it somewhat misrepresented him. He was a man of standing in his profession and lived on terms of intimacy with some of the most distinguished men of his day, to whom he was recommended by his medical skill, his literary attainments, and his social qualities. His benevolence, which was great, was not confined to those who agreed with him in politics. He was the physician and friend of Johnson, Burke, and Wilkes. To Johnson he made the generous offer of an annuity in order to enable him to seek a climate better suited to his health, and also of apartments in his own home. He bequeathed a legacy of a thousand pounds to Burke, and later altered his will so as to enable him to use the money during his own life-time.[4]

The sharpest satire of the play is in the episode of Last, who by trade is a doctor, and by profession, a shoemaker. He had first thought of sending for a 'diplummy' from Scotland, but Master Tith'em has told him he can get one for near the same price here in London. So he stops in at the College on his way to deliver a pair of shoes, has his examination, and is off—with his footgear under his arm—an authorized member of the medical profession. Dibdin states in his *History of the Stage*[5] that Last was said to be 'actually a living character.' I have not been able to identify him.

The comedy is full of Foote's favorite sarcasms about nations and sects—the Scotch, the Irish, the Jews, the Quakers, the Methodists. There is Johnny Macpherson, a Scot, who earns three-pence an hour for 'larning Latin to a physician in the ceety.' This same Johnny was 'heed of the

[4] For Dr. Brocklesby, see Munk, *op. cit.* 2. 201-4.
[5] 5. 246.

humanity-class for mair than a twelvemonth' at home, and 'was offered the chair of the grammatical professorship in the college, which amounts to a matter of sux pounds British a year.' The Quaker physician, Melchisedech Broadbrim, who objects to drawing his sword in the contest because he holds it not meet to use a carnal weapon, but posts off a brother physician to bring a lawyer, is taken from Dr. John Fothergill. The source of this item was the fact that in the contest with the College, Fothergill subscribed five hundred pounds toward 'bringing it to a legal decision' on the side of the licentiates.[6] He was a man of professional distinction not only in the field of medicine, but in that of botany.

Now that the lovers have arrived in England, they must find some means of livelihood. After what they have seen, they will have nothing to do with the physician's calling. The Devil suggests 'a little spiritual quackery . . . . How should you like mounting a cart on a common, and becoming a Methodist preacher?' They decline. 'What think you, then,' says he, 'of trying the stage?' They like that idea, and are advised to apply at one of the theatres; but the Devil says that he personally can serve them at neither, for the arts of the drama, which were formerly under his care, are now directed by the Genius of Insipidity.

His remarks upon this topic are full of interest for the student of stage history. The year the play was written, great disputes were going on among the new managers of Covent Garden, Colman, Harris, Powell, and Rutherford, who had the previous year (1767) bought the patent of John Rich's successor, Beard. Once things reached such a pitch, that one of the managers, when refused admittance by the others, broke into the building with the aid of some roughs

[6] Nichols, *Lit. Anec.* 9. 739, n. He gives an account of him with portrait (9. 211 ff. and 737 ff.). See also contemporary *Life* by Lettsom.

and carried off various properties. This was the year, too, of the memorable rivalry between the *Good-natured Man* and *False Delicacy,* in which Kelly was puffed and petted to the general neglect of Goldsmith—and to the honor of Insipidity. The Genius of Insipidity, says the Devil, 'has entered into partnership with the managers of both houses, and they have set up a kind of circulating library, for the vending of dialogue novels. I dare not go near the new houses, for the Daemon of Power, who gave me this lameness, has possessed the pates, and sown discord among the mock monarchs there; and what one receives the other rejects. And as to the other house,' says he, with the old fling at Garrick, 'the manager has great merit himself, with skill to discern, and candour to allow it in others; but I can be of no use in making your bargain, for in that he would be too many for the cunningest Devil amongst us.'

As a dramatic structure, the *Devil upon Two Sticks* is poor; but it was tremendously popular. Foote made between three and four thousand pounds by it—and lost seventeen hundred of them as soon as the season was over, at the gaming-tables in Bath.

One act from the *Devil upon Two Sticks* was afterwards used as an interlude under the title, *Dr. Last's Examination before the College of Physicians.* And on the twenty-first of June, 1769, this comical doctor came again before the Haymarket audience in a piece entitled *Dr. Last in his Chariot,* which was a free translation by Isaac Bickerstaff of Molière's *Malade Imaginaire* 'with some new scenes by Mr. Samuel Foote.[7] Foote acted the part of Ailwou'd (Molière's Argan). When Wag, the servant of the heroine's lover, impersonating a physician, tells him that in order to establish his health, he had best cut off an arm and pluck out an eye, 'Mr. Foote here observes,' says the reporter,[8] ' "that some of

[7] From title page of play as printed, London 1794, in *Parsons's Minor Theatre.* The play was first published in 1769.

[8] *Town and Country* 1[1]. 325-6.

his brethren had been too busy with him already that way, and had (pointing to his leg) lopt off one limb; and that they wanted to reduce him to the state of an old pollard." This personal stroke has a very happy effect.' The reporter states that 'among the scenes which were best received was the consultation between doctors Coffin, Skeleton, and Bulruddery, and that of the physician feeling Ailwou'd's pulse to the minuet in Ariadne, which are ascribed to Foote.'

The second of the plays written under the shadow of Foote's terrible catastrophe was the *Lame Lover,* produced June 22, 1770, at the Haymarket. Like the *Devil upon Two Sticks,* it was a patent concession to the author's infirmity. The motive is the more obvious because Sir Luke Limp was intended as a representation of a man who was not lame. The story is told that when Foote parted with his theatre to Colman, a difference arose over the value of the *Lame Lover,* which Colman said would not bring as much as the other pieces. 'Yes it will,' said Foote, 'for though he is *nominally lame,* I shall always lend him a *foot* for his support.'[9]

The prototype of the hero was John Skrimshire Boothby Clopton, Esq.,[10] popularly known as Prince Boothby because of his fondness for associating with people of rank. Among his particular friends were the Duke of Rutland, the Earls of Carlisle and Derby, and Mr. Fox. Foote represents him as breaking a dinner engagement with an alderman in order to accept one from a knight, which he recalls almost upon the spot in favor of an earl, who, in turn, must take hasty apologies that he may at length sit down to eat with a duke. There are two portraits of Clopton by Sir Joshua Reynolds, both copied in the second volume of the *Connoisseur.*[11]

[9] Cooke, *Foote* 2. 64.

[10] See *Gent. Mag.* 70. Pt. 2. 800; *Town and Country* 2. 294; Cradock, *Mem.* 4. 276, n.

[11] Pp. 39 and 41.

The chief satire in the *Lame Lover* is on the chicanery of the law courts, and it was made more piquant by mimicry of certain well-known individuals. The most specific of the reviewers[12] intimates that the originals are 'Serjeant N..res' (the lawyer mimicked by Mrs. Circuit in Act 3) and 'the verbose tautological Serjeant W..k..r' (the lawyer mimicked by Sir Luke). 'W..k..r'[13] is understood to spell Whittaker, for the man, I presume, who presented himself as candidate for Middlesex along with Wilkes and Luttrell on the thirteenth of April, 1769, when Wilkes was elected by the constituency and refused his seat by Parliament. For N..res I have no gloss.

Except for some of the satirical details, which are excellent, the *Lame Lover* is without merit. As one of the reviewers remarked, it 'leaves all the parties as it found them, for as it contains no plot, there can be no catastrophe.'[14] But it had a fairly good run. The latest performance within my knowledge was at the Royalty Theatre in 1872. As usual with Foote's plays, it was published immediately.

Between the *Devil upon Two Sticks* and the *Lame Lover,* that is, during 1769, Foote's biographer says that he produced nothing. The *Town and Country Magazine,*[15] on the contrary, alludes during that year, to a 'petite piece, called the Perriwig, by Mr. Foote.' I have seen no more about this, and it is apparently not in print. But in the Harvard University Library there is a little volume which belongs to this year. Its title-page reads, *Wilkes: An Oratorio. As Performed at The Great Room in Bishopsgate-Street. Written by Mr. Foote. The Music by Signor Carlos Francesco Baritini, London.*

It is a slender skit and the list of *dramatis personae* would

[12] *Town and Country* 2. 361. There is a full-page plate of Act 3 opposite p. 360.

[13] *N. and Q.* 10th S. VIII. 142.

[14] *Gent. Mag.* 40. 379.

[15] 1. Pt. 1. 243.

indicate that it was never acted, for the names of the cast are not of actors, but of certain politicians. They are:

Dr. Typo	Mr. Horne
Creole	Mr. Beckford
Officers	Mr. Townsend Mr. Sawbridge
Printer	Mr. Baldwin
Bookseller	Mr. Williams

One recognizes these as the friends of John Wilkes at the period of his career to which the burlesque relates. The location of the scene is doubtless chosen because the Supporters of the Bill of Rights held some of their sessions in the London Tavern, Bishopsgate Street. There is no date on the title-page, but a notice in the *Public Advertiser* for October 28, 1769,[16] Wilkes' second birthday in the King's Bench Prison, which the oratorio celebrates, places it:

In Honour of *WILKES'S* Birth Day
This Day is published
Price Six-Pence
WILKES; an ORATORIO.
The Words by Mr. Foote
The Music by Signor Carlos Francesco Baritini.

The time is indicated in the song:

Come, all you jovial souls both far and near,
Attend unto my song, and lend an ear;
'Tis of Great Wilkes's birth-day, as you shall understand,
Who never feared no man that came from Scottish land.

The mention of his name, it makes, as we do hear,
All wicked ministers to stand in greatest fear:
Then let it ne'er be said, among you all, I pray,
That you forget aloud to sing on Wilkes's day.

[16] The same paper prints: *Middlesex: a Ballad. To be Sung this Evening at a Meeting of Gentlemen call'd the PATRIOT JUBILEE, in Honour of Mr. WILKES'S BIRTH-DAY.* For announcement of this 'Patriot Jubilee' see *Pub. Ad.*, Oct. 16, 1769.

> Besides, as some do know, Lord Bute wou'd him ensnare,
> For writing of North Britons, as I to you declare;
> But all their artful schemes could never him dismay,
> So do not e'er forget to value Wilkes's day.
>
> 'Tis true he is in prison, within those walls so strong,
> But that, as we do understand, will not be long;
> For in next April month, as for a truth we know,
> Brave 'Squire Wilkes so stout without those walls will go.

The day was celebrated all over England by the Wilkites with much burning of candles, presenting of compliments, and drawing of corks.[17] For nearly a year and a half Wilkes had been dining off the fat of the land in the luxurious apartments where he entertained his admirers during one continuous gala-day, referred to by him afterwards as 'the many tedious months of my long confinement.' The *dramatis personae* of this piece were his friends at the moment, most of them subsequently his enemies—John Horne, the macaroni parson, afterwards Horne-Tooke and Wilkes's bitterest opponent; Alderman William Beckford, the West India plutocrat just elected lord mayor of London; Alderman John Sawbridge and his fellow sheriff, Alderman James Townshend, who was later (1772) to contest the mayoralty successfully with Wilkes; Williams the bookseller, who had already paid in the pillory for having his name on the title-page of the folio *North Briton.*

> O Come, let us sing unto Wilkes,

runs the opening *recitative,*

> let us rejoice, and be exceeding glad. For he is the man who hath shewed us great things, and we are the people who read and believe in the works of his hands.

[17] See *Pub. Ad.,* Oct. 11, 13, 16, 25, 30; Nov. 2, 3. See Cradock's *Memoirs* 1. 22-3 for damage done his house by stones when all houses were required to be illuminated.

The Chorus sings:

> It is he who hath defended us, and not our Twitchers,

referring to Lord Sandwich, who, though once a friend of Wilkes, was now in ill repute with the Wilkites, on account of his attitude in Parliament with regard to the *Essay on Women*. The nickname had been applied to him from Macheath's speech in the last scene of the *Beggar's Opera*, 'That Jemmy Twitcher should peach me, I own surprised me,' because in condemning Wilkes in the House of Lords for the *Essay on Women* Sandwich seemed to have sacrificed the ties of friendship for mere party ends, since his condemnation of the essay was utterly at variance with his earlier fraternity with Wilkes and others in the infamous Medmenham Brotherhood.

The song continues:

> Thou turnest Bute to distraction—to distraction—to distraction—to distraction—and again thou sayest, Rise no more—rise no more—rise no more to perplex a free people.

Though the oratorio is friendly to Wilkes, the most pointed satire is, I think, in the following lines:

> How happy a debtor's life passes;
> How free from all care and all strife;
> No treasure he ever amasses;
> But chearfully spends his whole life.
> Sing tol de rol lol de rol lol.
>
> May Wilkes, our old friend, here continue;
> His company much we admire;
> May he and his num'rous retinue,
> Against the state ever conspire.
> Sing tol de rol lol de rol lol.

The Supporters of the Bill of Rights had undertaken the Herculean labor of discharging Wilkes's debts, while his admirers even in distant America were making up purses for him, and he was giving parties in the King's Bench Prison

with such delicacies as even his own prodigality could scarcely have supplied him elsewhere.

I am not certain that this little work is by Samuel Foote, though that its author meant it to be thought so is clear enough. On the other hand, neither can his authorship be disproved, for as the piece is continuous parody, it affords no opportunity for characteristic words and constructions.

CHAPTER VI

The *Maid of Bath* and the *Nabob*

On the twenty-sixth of June, 1771, at the Haymarket, Foote produced the *Maid of Bath*. The story tells how Solomon Flint, a miserly old country squire, who has won a reluctant promise of marriage from a pretty little opera-singer named Kitty Linnet, is tricked into regretting his engagement by certain men who wish to save the girl from him, attempts to withdraw from the marriage through a dishonorable proposal, and is exposed. It is based upon some events that had recently taken place at Bath, where the author had enjoyed an outing in 1770.

Foote's old acquaintance Thomas Sheridan was living there at the time, and his children were forming friendships with the children of Thomas Linley, the composer, who was also living there and exploiting his 'nest of nightingales,' as he called them. Linley's concerts in the Assembly Room were exceedingly popular. All his children were legally apprenticed to their father, the boys from the age of seven and the girls from eleven. The eldest daughter, Elizabeth, now about sixteen, had been before the public four years. She had assisted Sheridan in his *Attic Evenings* at the Haymarket Theatre and at Hickford's Room, Brewer Street, when she was only fifteen. A couple of years later than the date of Foote's play, a London magazine pronounced her 'the best English singer that ever made her appearance in public.'[1] Fanny Burney wrote in her diary in 1773, 'The applause and admiration she has met with can only be compared to what is given Mr. Garrick.' Gainsborough painted her portrait, and Sir Joshua Reynolds chose her for his *St. Cecilia* and for the

[1] *Town and Country* 5. 128.

Virgin in his *Nativity*. Even in her later years, she was placed by Walpole above all living beauties.

She was too beautiful, perhaps, and too much in the public eye, too poor, and too ill-mothered by the rather vulgar and miserly Mrs. Linley,[2] to avoid the tongue of scandal, though those who knew her were unanimous as to her modesty and fineness of character. She had many suitors, among whom was a certain Thomas Mathews. He was rich and rakish. Elizabeth had made a friend of him and afterwards, when she would, she could not get rid of his attentions. Whether he was married at the time of his proposal to her is uncertain: if it were not for Foote's neglecting to satirize him for it, it would seem probable that he was. At any rate, he returned to Bath with a wife a few months later.

Elizabeth's parents in the meantime had accepted a proposal for her from an elderly plutocrat named Sir Walter Long, and the settlement was drawn up, much against the girl's inclinations. At a sudden breaking off of the match, censure fell upon Long and he was dropped by many of his acquaintances. Linley declared his intention of bringing suit for breach of contract on the ground of the loss he had sustained through his daughter's withdrawal from all professional engagements during the period of her betrothal. Elizabeth, on her part, was ill from anxiety lest a letter she had written to Long begging him to release her because of her attachment to another (probably Mathews) should come to light if the trial took place. The suit against Long was withdrawn on his giving Linley £3000 and Elizabeth £1000 worth of jewels, besides other valuable presents.[3] Authorities differ as to the degree of Long's culpability in the dissolution of the contract.

Foote was on the spot when the affair was in progress and seems to have had an idea, in which Garrick, who was a friend

[2] See W. F. Rae, *Sheridan* 2. 7, and Sichel, *Sheridan* 1. 322.

[3] *Lloyd's Eve. Post* 29. 293.

of the family, apparently concurred, that he was championing the cause of injured virtue in dramatizing it.[4] Badcock apparently thinks it was his play that brought about the £3000 'reparation.'[5] Sichel[6] says that Foote tells us the play was actually a commission. I have not found any corroboration of this statement. He also says that 'The Drury Lane accounts in the Sheridan MSS. show that Sheridan actually revived it there in 1779 when he also revived his mother's comedy, "The Discovery." '[7] It seems strange to me that Sheridan, whose delicacy about his wife was so great that, even under strong pressure, he steadily refused to allow her to sing in public, should have admitted such a play upon his own stage; and the theatre notices for 1779 in the *Public Advertiser* which announce the *Discovery,* say nothing of the *Maid of Bath.*

Foote introduces many intimate details of Elizabeth Linley's home and her personal circumstances; such, for instance, as the name of the maid, Hannah (in the play Nancy, another form of Ann), and the room for a lodger.[8] 'You ken weel enow,' says Lady Catherine to Kitty Linnet, 'the first notice that e'er I took of you was on your acting in Allan Ramsay's play of Patie and Roger.' I find no record that Elizabeth performed in this particular piece, but a Scotch ballad was one of the things she sang in an early engagement with Thomas Sheridan at Bath.[9] Even her fine handwriting is mentioned by Foote: 'I am told, miss, that you write an exceeding good hand,' says her elderly flame; 'Then, miss, there is more pleasure in store; for you may employ any leisure time that you may have in being my clerk.' Mrs. Linley's pretentiousness and mercenary vulgarity are

[4] See prologue written for him by Garrick.
[5] Introduction to the *Maid of Bath.*
[6] *Sheridan* I. 324.
[7] *Ibid.* I. 189.
[8] *Ibid.*
[9] *Ibid.* I. 191.

unpleasantly delineated. Even when Flint has outraged decency by his proposal to Kitty, Mrs. Linnet is represented as contriving that her daughter may still catch him for a husband.

Foote seems unfair to Long. To make of him a farcical country squire who describes to his sweetheart the pleasures awaiting her on his isolated estate after the manner of Clodpate's encomiums to Caroline in *Epsom Wells* will do, but in the prologue he alludes to him as a 'monster,' and in the plot he makes him one. I find no evidence that he was a man of the stamp implied in Flint's infamous proposal to Kitty. Brinsley Sheridan, who married Elizabeth Linley and was intimately acquainted with all these events as they were taking place, always, so far as we know, regarded him with respect. However, as Doran remarks, Foote's satire 'did not kill Long; who lived till 1807, and bequeathed then, to the already wealthiest heiress in England, Miss Tilney, daughter of Sir James Tilney, Bart., nearly a quarter of a million of money.'[10]

Most of the characters in the comedy were recognized as portraits by people who had recently visited Bath—and in those days everybody who was anybody visited Bath. Major Racket is Major Mathews. Sir Christopher Cripple, willing to do a good deed at the end of a not very good life, offers to settle on Kitty, if she will accept Major Racket, a sum equal to that lost by breaking with Flint. 'But,' replies Kitty, 'there is a little account to be first settled between this gentleman and an old unhappy acquaintance of mine.'

'Who?'

'The Major can guess—the unhappy Miss Prim.'

The hall-boy at the Bear Inn (the real name of one of the most popular hotels in Bath[11]) had already acquainted the reader with this item in Mathews' history. 'What has

[10] *Annals* 2. 125.

[11] Barbeau, *Une ville d'eux anglaise au XVIII^e siècle*, chap. 5.

become of your colleague, honest Ned?' Racket had asked him.

And John had replied, 'The share he had in your honour's intrigue with Miss Prim soon made this city too hot for poor Ned.'

Who Ned and Miss Prim were we might know if only the reporters had been a little more gossipy—they are plain enough for an interested contemporary: Ned, for instance, is nephew to 'Alderman Surcingle the saddler, a piece of a Puritan.'

Billy Button, the tailor, who confides to his friends that he had once some thoughts himself of 'taking measure of Miss,' and who is suspected by Mrs. Linnet of being her daughter's secret choice, is described by a reviewer as the 'smart, little, self-sufficient taylor (well known at Bath) exceedingly laughable.'[12] Poultice was 'a celebrated Bath apothecary,'[13] but the characterization is too vague to be enlightening, for the tribe was legion in the health resort. Cooke says that Sir Christopher Cripple and Lady Catharine Coldstream are also portraits.[14] Lady Catharine's idea of punishing Flint is to get Maister Foote, the play-actor, to bring him on the stage.

Perhaps one of the most telling points among the personalities was a reference to Horne-Tooke. The conspirators, urging upon Flint the disadvantages of matrimony, point out the cost of trips back and forth to the city, 'and then the vast heap of fine clothes you must make.'

> FLINT. What occasion for that?
>
> BUTTON. As you ar'n't known, there is no doing without; because why, every body passes there for what they appears.
>
> FLINT. Right, Billy; but I believe I have found out a way to do that pretty cheap.

[12] *Town and Country* 3. 310-11.

[13] *Ibid.*

[14] *Foote* 1. 172. *Town and Country* (3. 310-11) makes a reference to General Armiger in connection with one of the events.

BUT. Which way may that be?

FLINT. You have seen the minister that's come down to tack us together—

BUT. I have: is he a fine man in the pulpit?

FLINT. He don't care much to meddle with that; but he is a prodigious patriot, and a great politician to boot.

BUT. Indeed!

FLINT. And he has left behind him, at Paris, a choice collection of curious rich clothes, which he has promised to sell me a penn'orth.

A dispute between this prodigious patriot and another even more prodigious, John Wilkes, over certain 'curious rich clothes' was just then coming out in the *Public Advertiser*. The matter referred to had happened back in the spring of 1767. Horne had written to Wilkes:

Dear Sir,

According to your permission I leave with you:

1 suit of scarlet and gold, cloth.
1 suit of white and silver, cloth.
1 suit of blue and silver, camblet.
1 suit of flowered silk.
1 suit of black silk.
1 black velvet surtout.

If you have any fellow feeling, you cannot but be kind to them; since they too, as well as yourself, are outlawed in England; and on the same account—their superior worth.

I am, dear sir,
Your very affectionate,
humble servant,

John Horne.

Then this macaroni parson had gone back to England clothed in sober clerical garb, and had set to work in behalf of the exiled idol. In two years he had founded an organization to pay the demagogue's debts, the Society for Supporting the Bill of Rights. But before the close of 1771 he came to the conclusion that the society was really supporting only the interests of a corrupt individual; and so he moved a dis-

solution of it. Then occurred the spirited duel to which a subscription to the *Public Advertiser* gave one daily admittance. Among other items, as though planned with the art of a novelist, now reappear the clothes. Horne asserted in the third letter[15] of the series, that he had sent for the clothes by his brother-in-law, Mr. Wildman, who had called on Wilkes in Paris for the purpose, but had failed to get them, owing to Wilkes's evasions. Upon a second application, he says a friend of Wilkes's told Wildman that 'he might as well save himself the trouble of his visits, he would get neither money nor clothes; for that Mr. Wilkes was exceedingly distressed, and had been forced lately to pawn the clothes.' 'For my own part,' says Horne disingenuously, 'I never made the least inquiry after my clothes, but have received a letter within the last three months from M. Panchaud, informing me that they have long been in his possession.' To this Wilkes retorted,[16] 'You say, "for my own part I never made the least inquiry after my clothes." I suppose for the plainest reason in the world: you knew where they were, and that they could be no part of a clergyman's dress in England, but that you were sure of so *rich a wardrobe* on your next tour to France or Italy, as Paris would probably be your route.'

This childish dispute long continued to occupy a prominent place in the controversy. 'Your assertion of *pawning* them is an impudent falsehood,' wrote Wilkes, May 24,[17] 'and a rascally return for the care I took of such trifles, at your desire, during the time I staid at Paris, and even on my leaving France. . . . I will only add, about the *old clothes,*' he says, as his final fling, 'that, when you next wear *red,* I hope it will be, *i suit of scarlet and gold-cloth,* not of *black died red with the blood—of your countrymen.*'

[15] Quoted Stephens, *Memoirs of Horne Tooke* 1. 209 ff.
[16] *Ibid.* 1. 213.
[17] *Ibid.* 1. 230.

It was the last week in June when Foote began echoing this dispute in his theatre. Then Horne wrote to the *Advertiser* (July 13): *'Farce, Comedy, and Tragedy, Wilkes, Foote, and Junius,* united at the same Time against one poor Parson, are fearful Odds.' The letter was addressed to Junius, who, believing that Horne had deserted to the government, had now entered the field against him. With so formidable an enemy attacking him on graver issues, Foote's little jibes were inconsiderable. 'The two former,' wrote Horne, 'are only labouring in their vocation, and may equally plead in excuse, that their aim is a livelihood. I admit the plea for the *second;* his is an honest calling, and my clothes are lawful game.'

There had been some previous use of Foote's name in the letters between Horne and Wilkes.[18] Wilkes had charged Horne with defrauding Foote of forty or fifty pounds, which he said he took from Messrs. Davis,[19] the booksellers. Horne replied that this was a falsehood and referred to his 'disinterested friendship' to Foote. These letters were just the thing to make Foote's comedy popular. Nor is it likely he was much troubled by such notes as the following, which appeared in *Lloyd's Evening Post* on July 5:

> On Wednesday Mr. Foote received the following letter by the Penny-post:
>
> *St. James's Coffee-House,*
> *Tuesday evening*
>
> *'Mr. LEG,*
>
> *'SIR,*
>
> 'If you continue acting your new Piece, called *The Maid of Bath,* expect some dire event; for sure as you come on with your Prologue, so sure will I have a strong party, and a particular person so fixed as to speak the Prologue for you, after he has disabled you of your other Leg.
>
> 'Had you done the scandal to me you have to Mr. L..g, I

[18] See *Pub. Ad.*, Jan. 14, 1771.

[19] Tom Davies' name is often spelled Davis.

would have made no scruple of giving you a little cold lead,—that is, shot you through the head. As I am a particular friend of Mr. L..g, so I think it my duty to see this done. Take warning from

Mars.

'You touch the Parson, and he'll touch you.'

The same paper announced July 26-9 that, 'Miss L..., of Bath has commenced an Action for damages against Mr. ...., as he has also against Mr. Foote.'

Foote's play considerably increased the notoriety of the persons burlesqued. Long went by the name of Solomon Flint for years[20] and Elizabeth Linley was familiarly known as the Maid of Bath.[21] Other writers took up the story again in other accounts of Bath. A dull brochure entitled *Bath Characters* by Peter Paul Pallet (pseudonym for Richard Warner), which went through three editions in two years and was supplied with a complete key to the characters, used two of Foote's names in referring to the Linley episode, 'a little Linnet' and 'Rattle' (obviously suggested by Foote's Racket).

Since the *Maid of Bath* has from the artistic point of view no real conclusion, a certain Adam Moses Emanuel Cooke[22] essayed to give it one in the *Hermit Converted; or, the Maid of Bath Married. In one act by way of Supplement to the Maid of Bath Mocked. In order to redeem the Reputation of the little Theatre Royal in the Haymarket.* The author's objection to the comedy is its 'sinister Encouragement of Coelibacy in the Fair Sex, by reducing the Maid of Bath to

[20] Sichel 1. 190.

[21] There is a narrative of her experience with Long, Mathews, and Sheridan, entitled *'ANECDOTES of the MAID OF BATH (with an ELEGANT ENGRAVING)' London Mag.* 41. 406-8.

Cumberland's epilogue to the play, printed *ibid.* 40. 372-3. Prologue and epilogue were printed in the *Lady's Magazine or Entertaining Companion to the Fair Sex,* 2. 39; prologue in *Lloyd's Eve. Post* 29. 22.

[22] Pseudonym for Thomas Cooke. Each copy was signed on first and last page in Cooke's own handwriting.

the Dilemma of either chusing a Husband out of an old Hunks or Grub, a Debauchee, a gouty Rake, and a mechanical Prig, or else of living and dying in a Cloyster of her own making.' This sentence from the prefatory note addressed to Foote, is one of the few intelligible ones in the book. Among the *dramatis personae* are the Maid of Bath, the Major, Billy Button, Foote, Woodward, and a hermit. It is full of political innuendoes.

Foote's *Maid of Bath* was put upon the market in printed form by George Allen in 1771, but there was no authorized edition of it till Colman's in 1778.

A play or so a year was Foote's apparent stint. In the year 1772, the natural subject for his muse was Indian nabobs. Everywhere in these days were to be seen the gorgeous equipages of Anglo-Indian money-kings, many of them men who were low-born, but arrogant and more lavish than dukes, whom they aped and browbeat. 'They raised the price of everything,' says Lord Macaulay in his famous description, 'from fresh eggs to rotten boroughs.' Over them the storm had for some time been gathering, and it was presently to spend its greatest fury on the most magnificent of their number and the least ignoble. In the first month of this year Lord Clive was privately informed that charges had been made against him in connection with his government of Bengal. By the middle of April a bill was formally introduced into Parliament 'for the better regulation of the affairs of the East India Company, and of their servants in India, and for the due administration of justice in Bengal,' which developed into an inquiry into the conduct of Lord Clive in India, not concluded till the spring of 1773.

There was never an accusation, so far as I know, that Foote's *Nabob*, which was produced at the Haymarket during the summer this matter was pending, was directed against Lord Clive personally. Nor, indeed, does the author criticise all the Anglo-Indian princes. 'There are men from the Indies, and many too, with whom I have the honour to live,' says

one of the characters, 'who dispense nobly and with hospitality here what they have acquired with honour and credit elsewhere; and, at the same time that they have increased the dominions and wealth, have added virtues, too, to their country.'

But the hero is not of this sort: he is vulgar, ostentatious, even dishonest. He swaggers about with his *lacks of rupees,* as he now calls his money. He offers to settle a *jagghire* on the parents (impoverished by his chicanery) of the girl he intends to force into marriage with him in order that he may ride into society on her skirts.

'His style is a little oriental, I must own,' says the girl's uncle, 'but most exceedingly clear.'

'Yes, to Cossim Ali-Khan or Mier Jaffeir,' is the reply. The remarks must have been piquant to people who were trying to follow the Oriental phrases in the trial just then going on in the House of Commons.

Foote signified the original of his nabob by the allegorical name. Sir Matthew Mite[23] was meant for a certain son of a cheesemonger named General Richard Smith. 'Every day gives us more East Indies,' wrote Walpole a year or two after this. 'Advice has just come that we have taken Tanjore, and a General Smith has got 150,000 l. for his share.'[24] The General's way of using 'his share' is seen in another item from the same writer,[25] 'As folks in the country love to hear of *London fashions,* know, Madam, that the reigning one amongst the *quality* is to go after the Opera to the lottery offices, where their Ladyships bet with the keepers. You choose any number you please; if it does not come up next day, you pay five guineas; if it does, receive forty, or in proportion to the age of the *tirage.* The Duchess of Devonshire in one day won nine hundred pounds. General Smith,

[23] See N. E. D. Mite. Slang. A cheesemonger.
[24] *Letters* 8. 436.
[25] *Ibid.* 11. 341.

as the luckiest of all mites, is of the most select parties, and chooses the numeros.'

Cooke says there was nothing about Sir Matthew Mite except his father's business, that in the least resembled the supposed original. The public thought they recognized not only General Smith, but also another man in the same character. Said the *London Magazine*,[26] 'The *jaghire* and a thousand other circumstances, point out a certain *lord;* while a certain *general* is well marked by the cheesemonger's son and the name.' The 'lord' was Sir Matthew White.[27] There is extant a letter from George Garrick to his brother, written after the *Nabob* had been acted, in which he mentions as an extraordinary fact that Foote was invited to dine and spend the night with General Smith at Sir Matthew White's, and he adds, 'Foote is afraid that they will put him in the coal-hole.'[28] This helps to corroborate the story of the two nabobs who, believing themselves maligned in the character of Mite, waited on Foote at his lodgings with cudgels, but were so disarmed by his hospitality that they were ever after loud in praise of his wit, and during the whole run of the piece, assiduous in attendance upon it.[29] Foote told them the play had no reference to them—he was a gallant liar.

The East India Company itself was also alluded to in 'one of our people from Leadenhall-street, perhaps a Director,' whom the porter at Sir Matthew's house contemptuously neglected.[30] The scene of the porter contained one of the most marked personalities in the piece.

A loud rap is heard. He peeps out.

[26] 41. 309.

[27] *Town and Country* (8. 345-7) prints *'Histories of the Téte-â-Téte [sic] annexed: or, Memoirs of Sir Matthew Mite and Mrs. A..st..d'*—a scurrilous account of Sir Matthew's original. All these 'Tête-à-têtes' are accompanied by portraits, usually genuine.

[28] *Private Correspondence of David Garrick, 2.* 41.

[29] Cooke, *Foote* 1. 177-82.

[30] See *London Mag.* 41. 308, n.

Oh, oh! is it you, with a pox to you? How the deuce came your long legs to find the way hither?—I shall be in no haste to open to you.

CONS. Who is it?

JANUS. That eternal teaser, Sir Timothy Tallboy. When once he gets footing, there is no such thing as keeping him out.

CONS. What, you know him then?

JANUS. Yes, rot him, I know him too well! he had like to have lost me the best place I ever had in my life.

CONS. How so?

JANUS. Lord Lofty had given orders on no account to admit him. The first time, he got by me under a pretence of stroking Keeper, the house-dog; the next, he nick'd me by desiring only just leave to scratch the poll of the parrot, 'Poll, Poll, Poll!' I thought the devil was in him if he deceived me a third; but he did, notwithstanding.

CONS. Prithee, Janus, how?

JANUS. By begging to set his watch by Tompion's clock in the hall; I smoked his design, and laid hold of him here: [*taking hold of his coat.*] As sure as you are alive, he made but one leap from the stairs to the study, and left the skirt of his coat in my hand.

CONS. You got rid of him, then?

JANUS. He made one attempt more; and, for fear he should slip by me, (for you know he is as thin as a slice of beef at Marybone-gardens,) I slapped the door in his face, and told him, the dog was mad, the parrot dead, and the clock stood; and, thank heaven, I have never sat eyes on him since.

This passage was greatly enjoyed because the incident had actually happened some time earlier at a certain lord's residence.[31]

Sir Timothy Tallboy, who is said by a reviewer[32] to be 'Sir T. R., the long knight of Chelsea,' must be Sir Thomas Robinson of Rokeby Park, Yorkshire, he who practically made the Rokeby now haunted by tourists in honor of Scott's poem. He was apparently long in two senses. His long

[31] According to the *London Mag.* (41. 308, n.) at 'Lord B..ke's' and according to *Town and Country* (6. 178), 'Lord B..rl..n's.'

[32] *London Mag.* cited above.

speeches in Parliament were famous and so was his tall, slender figure, particularly by contrast with the short, fat one of his contemporary of the same name, Thomas Robinson, second Baron Grantham. 'I can't imagine,' said Lady Townshend, 'why one is preferred to the other. The one is as broad as the other is long.' Lord Chesterfield wrote to Sir Thomas in his last illness, 'Ah, Sir Thomas, it will be sooner over with me than it will be with you, for I am dying by inches.' Others besides Foote have memorialized Robinson in caricature. Fielding had him in mind in his description of the nose and chin on Joseph Andrews' cudgel, 'which was copied from the face of a certain long English baronet of infinite wit, humour, and gravity'; and Hogarth represented him as the figure in the side-box in his picture of the *Beggar's Opera.*[33]

Though Foote satirizes the nabobs in England, he makes it clear that their venality could thrive there only because the soil was adapted to it. Like Molière's Jourdain, like his own Buck and Zach Fungus, Foote's nabob is at the mercy of those who would teach him how to behave in society; in his shady amours he is swindled by one worse than himself, the infamous Mrs. Match'em; in his political ambitions, he is lured by the corruptability of constituencies.

'After all, Master Touchit, I am not so fond of these nabobs,' says one politician to another, who thinks they do a deal of harm in the country, raising the price of provisions.

'Why, you talk like a fool!' is the rejoinder. 'Suppose they have mounted the beef and mutton a trifle; a'n't we obliged to them for raising the value of boroughs?'

These men are members of the Christian Club of the borough of Bribe'em, which 'may have some fears of the gallows,' but 'don't value damnation of a farthing.' The

[33] Most of the hints for the identification of this character beyond the above cited note of the initials, come from *Town and Country* (6. 177-80), *'Histories of the Tête-à-Tête annexed; or, Memoirs of Sir* Timothy Tallboy *and* Mrs. G . . . s.'

treaty which Sir Matthew enters into with this organization is spoken of by a reviewer[34] as 'humorously and satirically exposing the late proceedings of the Christian Club of Shoreham.' The borough goes to Sir Matthew for five thousand pounds. *Town and Country*[35] in an article upon Smith (under the name of Matthew Mite) says, 'A brother Nabob making his personal appearance there, and bidding a higher price, he prevailed, and had the honour of being the cause of disfranchising that borough.'

Sir Matthew will not recognize the men who had been boys at school with him, though, as one of them says, if he *has* 'grown great by robbing the heathens, . . . the great Turk himself needn't be ashamed to shake hands with a citizen,' and he'll be sworn his own company has made more money by a single election at Brentford, than Sir Matthew by all his exploits together. Sir Matthew has his eye on higher things. In the present scene he is on his way to the Society of Antiquaries, of which learned body he has been elected a member in consideration of certain curious remains that he has presented.

The main satire of this act was meant for the Society of Antiquaries. Sir Matthew's inauguration speech is upon the subject of Whittington's cat. His learned conclusion is as follows:

> Let puss have been ever so subtle, let puss have been ever so successful, to what could puss's captures amount? no tanner can curry the skin of a mouse, no family make a meal of the meat; consequently, no cat could give Whittington his wealth. From whence, then, does this error proceed? be that my care to point out!
>
> The commerce this worthy merchant carried on, was chiefly confined to our coasts; for this purpose, he constructed a vessel, which, from its agility and lightness, he aptly christened a cat. Nay, to this our day, gentlemen, all our coals from Newcastle

[34] *Town and Country* 4. 374.
[35] 8. 345-7.

> are imported in nothing but cats. From thence it appears, that it was not the whiskered, four-footed, mouse-killing cat, that was the source of the magistrate's wealth, but the coasting, sailing, coal-carrying cat; that, gentlemen, was Whittington's cat.

Tait in his article on Whittington in the *Dictionary of National Biography,* mentioning the various attempts to rationalise the legend by reference to the word *cat* as a name for ships used in the coal trade, speaks of the idea as 'a mere humorous suggestion of Samuel Foote.' But Foote, I think, may have had it second-hand. A dissertation upon the subject had been delivered before the Society of Antiquaries by one of its members, Dr. Samuel Pegge,[36] and Gough writing to Michael Tyson on the twenty-seventh of December, 1771, made the following suggestion: 'Mr. Pegge gave us next the History of Whittington, but could make nothing at all of his *cat,* though she is his constant companion in all statues and pictures: and I firmly believe, if not a rebus for some ship which made his fortune, she was the companion of his arm chair, like Montaigne's.'

Two or three weeks after the *Nabob* was first acted, Horace Walpole wrote to Mason, 'This taste of digging up antiquated relics flourishes abundantly, unless Foote's last new piece blows us up. He has introduced the Learned Society in Chancery Lane, sitting, as they really did, on Whittington and his cat; and as I do not love to be answerable for any fooleries but my own, I think I shall scratch my name out of their books.'[37] But this was really only an excuse, as he admitted later:[38] the reason for his withdrawal from the society was that he heard they intended printing 'some more foolish notes' against his *Richard the Third.*

[36] Nichols, *Lit. Anec.* 8. 575.
[37] *Letters* 8. 184.
[38] *Ibid.* 1. li.

CHAPTER VII

Last Plays

The *Primitive Puppet Show,* the *Bankrupt,* the *Cozeners,* a *Trip to Calais,* the *Capuchin*

In February, 1773, Foote made an open attack upon the reigning type of drama in a parody which he introduced into his *Primitive Puppet Show.* He informed the audience that the piece about to be acted was a Sentimental Comedy, called the *Handsome Housemaid, or Piety in Pattens,* that they would not discover much wit and humor in it, 'for that his brother writers had all agreed it was highly improper, and beneath the dignity of a mixed assembly, to shew any signs of joyful satisfaction, and that creating a laugh was forcing the higher order of the audience to a vulgar and mean use of their muscles; he had therefore, like them, given up the sensual for the sentimental stile.' The writer here quoted describes the play as follows:

> The piece was of two acts; the story, a servant-girl, who was fallen in love with by her master, and offered a settlement by him, but is warned by Thomas the Butler, who loves her, and tells her to beware of her master, for if she once loses her virtue, she will have no pretensions to chastity. She takes his advice, and slights her master; who, overcome by her honest principles, and the strength of his passion, offers to marry her: she begs Thomas may be by to hear the reply she gives to such a noble offer, when she immediately bestows her hand on the Butler for counselling her so well. The 'Squire, vanquished by such superior goodness, gives his consent to their junction, when the heroine, out of gratitude for his condescension, resolves to marry neither, and to live single, although she loves them both.[1]

[1] *Town and Country* 5. 99 f.

According to this reporter, the name of the virtuous serving-maid is Polly (short, perhaps, for Pamela); her wicked pursuer, Squire Boothby (long, perhaps, for Mr. B.—already developed by Fielding into Booby). But in the manuscript in the Henry E. Huntington Library in California, which I have seen, the Squire's name is Thirdle. This copy has no sub-title and is without the author's name.

Piety in Pattens is occasionally referred to as *Purity in Pattens*.[2] It was sometimes acted as an interlude without the rest of the *Primitive Puppet Show*.

The use of puppets had probably been suggested to Foote by the Italian show that had been exhibiting in Panton Street not far from the Haymarket by the Fantoccini. But his production must have differed somewhat, for it is spoken of in the reports as 'a new species of entertainment.' A newspaper described it thus:

> This entertainment consists of three grand divisions: the oration; the comedy; and the scene with Punch. . . . The humourist was as good as his word, for his comedy was a close copy of those modern plays which disgrace our theatre. The same incidents, sentiments, and words are introduced.

The performance opened with one of those long exordiums[3] for which Foote had such a fondness. It was full of sarcasms about the actors at the other houses. He said that though he was no friend to monopolies, he could wish there were no other puppet show in this town but his own, and that no nobler hands were employed in moving wires and strings than what were concealed by his curtain. The puppets may have been painted, like the masks of Aristophanes, to represent the persons burlesqued. Describing the puppets, he said: 'We have modern patriots, made from

[2] *E.g. Pub. Ad.*, July 10 and Aug. 7, 1776.

[3] Printed in Badcock's edition of the works and in Oulton's *History of the Theatres of London* 1. 15-23; *Town and Country* 5. 319-21; *Biog. Dramat.* 3. 150-6.

the box,—it is a wood that carries an imposing *gloss,* and may be easily *turned;* for constant lovers, we have the circling ivy, crab stocks for old maids, and weeping willows for methodist preachers; for modish wives we have the brittle poplar; their husbands we shall give you in hornbeam; for the serenity of philosophic, unimpassioned tragedy, we have frigid actors, hewn out of petrified blocks; and a *theatrical manager upon stilts, made out of the mulberry tree.*' With this and another slight reference Aristophanes left Roscius alone—not that he had intended to do so, but something had come up to change his mind. He had already found occasion for his characteristic jibes before the 'entertainment' was given, as, for instance, in his reply to the lady who had inquired whether the puppets were going to be life-sized. 'Oh, dear, no, madam,' said he, 'not much above the size of Garrick.'[4]

As might be expected in an attack upon Sentimental Comedy, Kelly and Cumberland were brought in.[5] Cumberland's *Fashionable Lover* was playing at Drury Lane at the time. The actress who was starring in Cradock's *Zobeide* at Covent Garden, Mrs. Yates, had been thought of for the heroine, and 'part of a dialogue was printed,' says Cradock,[6] 'in which she was made to regret, that if wooden actresses were once admitted, her services might hereafter be dispensed with; but Mr. Foote kindly informs her that, as she can occasionally put on a pretty melancholy face, he has no doubt but she would succeed excellently well at the tabernacle; especially if none of her friends, mentioning names, should be able to write any character that might be agreeable to her, at either of the winter theatres.' Cradock states that in the original plan Johnson and Goldsmith were to be the leading characters, but what he says about the former is so confused with facts connected with the *Orators* that he may be incorrect in this.

[4] Cooke, *Foote* 2. 58.
[5] Cradock, *Mem.* 4. 281.
[6] *Ibid.* 1. 33.

The first performance of the *Puppet Show* was not a great success. A huge throng had assembled in the expectation of something very novel; indeed, the Haymarket was impassable for more than an hour before the opening of the doors and finally the mob broke into the building. Then they did not like the entertainment and so the conclusion was even more disorderly than the opening.[7] The dissatisfaction was partly due to the fact that, owing to the crowd, it had been necessary to use the gallery seats, from which the puppets were seen to disadvantage.[8] Cradock thought the house was displeased with the personalities. Foote seemed to him disconcerted when he met him the next day. He said he hoped Cradock was not affronted at being alluded to in the comedy.

'Not in such good company, Mr. Foote,' was the reply, 'but I hear you burnt your fingers.'

'Singed them a little,' Foote admitted. 'But if we do not take liberties with our friends, with whom can we take liberties?'

Foote worked the piece over, lengthening it somewhat, and it was afterwards more successful.[9] It is not published among his works. Cradock says that the scene of Polly Pattens was printed in the *Bon Ton Magazine* with a good illustration.[10] Henry Angelo wrote in his *Reminiscences,* published in 1830 (2. 414): 'Previous to the second conflagration of Drury-lane Theatre, Mr. Waldron, who was the prompter there at that time, favoured me with the manuscript of that piece, as I had then some idea of playing the part of the Butler, with a few amateur actors; and I believe I am the only person (it is not in print) that has the copy.' But Richard Heber had a copy listed in his printed catalogue (Pt. XI. MSS. No. 429) which was sold at his death in 1833

[7] *Gent. Mag.* 43. 101.
[8] *Town and Country* 5. 99-100.
[9] *Pub. Ad.,* Feb. 17, 1773; *Biog. Dramat.* 3. 450 f.
[10] *Mem.* 4. 281.

to Thomas Rodd, the bookseller, and there is the manuscript in the Huntington Library referred to above.

Oddly enough, the nearest Foote ever came to writing a Sentimental Drama seriously was in the very season in which he wrote this satire on the species. His Sentimental play was the *Bankrupt,* which appeared during the run of the *Primitive Puppet Show.* The reason for writing in this vein was that, for once, his sympathies were touched. In this unaccustomed mood he changed the hero, originally intended to be a scamp, into a high-minded gentleman who is too conscientious to save his fortune by truckling with the bankrupt laws. He is so noble, indeed, that tears stand in the eyes of the *Critical Reviewer* while he re-reads the story—so, at least, he says when noticing the publication of the play.[11]

It was Foote's idea to strike a blow at fraudulent bankruptcies. The previous year business had suffered an unprecedented calamity through the failure of the banking-house of Neal, James, Fordyce, and Downs.[12] *The Gentleman's Magazine*[13] stated at the time that it was 'beyond the power of words to describe the general consternation of the metropolis.' 'No event for 50 years past has been remembered to have given so fatal a blow both to trade and public credit.'[14] Universal bankruptcy was expected. The cause lay in the speculations of a single man, Alexander Fordyce[15] of the above-named firm, who was nevertheless respected as a man of integrity. Foote's friends felt that his plan of satirizing the resort to bankruptcy as a means of avoiding obligations would hardly fail to be associated with Fordyce, and persuaded him to make such changes as would avoid the danger of application to 'this unhappy person.'[16]

[11] 41. 481.

[12] Failure announced *Gent. Mag.* 42. 292.

[13] 42. 293.

[14] *Gent. Mag.* 42. 293.

[15] Account of his trial before the Commissioners in Guildhall, *ibid.* 42. 434-6. A popular account of him, *ibid.* 42. 311.

[16] Davies, *Garrick* 2. 267; Cooke, *Foote* 1. 186-7.

The most interesting personal allusion in the *Bankrupt* is one that the reader had almost expected in the *Nabob*. Although that play came out just as the trial of Lord Clive was opening in Parliament and was upon the subject of British officials who had amassed fortunes in India, it contained no allusion to Clive. Now as the trial was drawing to an end, Foote introduced into the prologue of the *Bankrupt* a close parody of Clive's speech in the House of Commons on May 17 of that year. Clive had spoken of the approval with which his conduct of Indian affairs had been viewed when he was in India and of his anxiety for the effect of the resolution now before the house. The speech continues:

> These, Sir, are dreadful apprehensions to remain under; and I cannot look upon myself but as a bankrupt. I have not anything left that I can call my own, except my paternal fortune of 500 l. per annum .... But upon this I am content to live; and perhaps I shall find more real content of mind and happiness than in the trembling affluence of an unsettled fortune .... But to be called upon, after sixteen years have elapsed, to account for my conduct in this manner, and, after an uninterrupted enjoyment of my property, to be questioned, and considered as obtaining it unwarrantably, is hard indeed! and a treatment I should not think the British Senate capable of. But, if such should be the case, I have a conscious innocence within me that tells me my conduct is irreproachable. *Frangas, non flectes.* My enemies may take from me what I have; they may, as they think, make me poor, but I will be happy! I mean not this as my defence, though I have done for the present. My defence will be heard at that bar; but before I sit down, I have one request to make to the House,—that, when they come to decide upon my honour, they will not forget their own.[17]

Foote's parody ran:

> You, gentle sirs, have given me credit long,
> And took my word for many an idle song;
> But if exhausted, I give notes to-day—
> For wit and humour which I cannot pay,
> I must turn Bankrupt too, and hop away.
> . . . . . .

[17] J. Malcolm, *Life of Lord Clive* 3. 346-55.

But after all, my ever-honour'd friends,
On you alone my fate this night depends;
I've fought some battles, gain'd some vict'ries here,
And little thought a culprit to appear
Before this house; but if resolv'd you go
To find me guilty, or to make me so,
To grant me neither wit, nor taste, nor sense,
Vain were my plea, and useless my defence.
But still, I will not steal, I will not beg,
Though I've a passport in this wooden leg,
But to my cot contentedly retire,
And stew my cabbage by my only fire;
Meantime, great sirs, my sentence yet unknown,
E'en as your justice be your candour shown,
And when you touch my honour, don't forget your own.[18]

In 1774 Foote's new play was the *Cozeners,* in plot and characterization a patch-work of materials that he had used elsewhere. The presiding daemon is Mrs. Fleece'em, sister to Mrs. Match'em in the *Nabob* and Mrs. Mechlin in the *Commissary*. She engages—for a consideration—to provide you with a bride or a job and is no more alert to swindle you than do the same by her accomplice, Mr. Flaw, a shyster lawyer. He, however, has something the whip hand of her, because he knows of her having been transported for stealing a piece of lace from a shop in the Strand and returning before the expiration of her term. She is resourceful: she knows how, for the prestige of it, to bribe a great man's coachman to parade before her house for an hour while his master is—not within; or how to get fifty pounds out of poor ignorant O'Flannigan for a recommendation to the job of tide-waiter in an inland part of America. She has brought a black girl from America whom she is arranging to marry for a large sum to Toby Aircastle, who with his parents has lately arrived from the country. If she is not discovered, there is a rich harvest a-coming. But she is discovered—through the

[18] The prologue was printed in the *Theatrical Bouquet,* pp. 61-2.

agency of Colonel Gorget, a man with whom Mrs. Aircastle is carrying on a flirtation.

Aircastle is one of Foote's memorable comic characters. He is a further development of Sir Penurious Trifle in the *Knights*. His wandering tongue leads him on and on till he has completely forgotten his initial topic. His original was an Irish gentleman by the name of Gahagan. Whether Gahagan knew of the use Foote made of him we are not told; but, after Foote's death, he wrote an account of the dramatist which, though critical, is free from enmity. It is quoted in Boaden's *Memoirs of Mrs. Siddons*.[19] I see little similarity between the style in this article and that of Mr. Aircastle.

Mrs. Aircastle has a passion for getting on in the world and has trained up her son in the fear of Lord Chesterfield, whose letters, being just then published, Foote must honor with notice in his play. Poor Toby endeavors to do as his ambitious mother would have him, but with small success.

'Grace, Mr. Aircastle, grace,' says Mrs. A. to her husband. 'I wish you would read some late Posthumous Letters; you would then know the true value of grace: do you know that the only way for a young man to thrive in the world is to get a large dish of hypocrisy, well garnished with grace, an agreeable person, and a clear patrimonial estate?'

Lord Eliot, who had traveled with young Stanhope and wondered that 'a man who shewed so much affection for his son as Lord Chesterfield did . . . should endeavour to make his son a rascal,' told Dr. Johnson that 'Foote had intended to bring on the stage a father who had thus tutored his son, and to shew the son an honest man to every one else, but practising his father's maxims upon him and cheating him.' Said Johnson, 'I am much pleased with this design; but I think there was no occasion to make the son honest at all. No; he should be a consummate rogue: the contrast between honesty and knavery would be the stronger. It should be con-

[19] Ed. Philadelphia, 1827, p. 31. f.

trived so that the father should be the only sufferer by the son's villainy, and thus there would be poetical justice.[20]

Mrs. Aircastle's first notion is to advertise for a wife for Toby. 'Don't we see by the news,' says she, 'that there is no other way of making matches in London?' So she writes an advertisement of the sort that were common in the dailies of the period. But she eventually substitutes an application to Mrs. Fleece'em, who offers her rich heiress on substantially the same terms as those offered to Zach Fungus by Mrs. Mechlin in the *Commissary*. The girl is the Negro from America. Mrs. Fleece'em takes pains not to have her seen till the bargain is clinched. Toby gets a view of her a little too soon even at that, and it is not long before the whole secret is out.

The temerity of Samuel Foote remains amazing. At whom is he pointing now that finger of ridicule? At Charles James Fox, indeed! One of Horace Walpole's letters to the Countess of Ossory written half a year before the *Cozeners* was produced sounds almost like a rough draft of Foote's plot:

> I am so cowed by having given you unauthentic history, that I must protest devoutly I do not affirm one syllable of what I am going to tell you. I know nothing of the following legend, but from that old maid, Common Fame, who outlies the newspapers. You have read in Fielding's chronicle the tale of the Hon. Mrs. Grieve; but could you have believed that Charles Fox could have been in the list of her dupes? Well, he was. She promised him a Miss Phipps, a West Indian fortune of 150,000 l. Sometimes she was not landed, sometimes had the small-pox. In the meantime, Miss Phipps did not like a black man; Celadon must powder his eyebrows. He did, and cleaned himself. A thousand Jews thought he was gone to Kingsgate to settle the payment of his debts. Oh no! he was to meet Celia at Margate. To confirm the truth, the Hon. Mrs. Grieve advanced part of the fortune—some authors say an hundred and sixty, others three hundred pounds—but how was this to answer to

[20] Boswell 4. 384-5.

> the matron?—why by Mr. Fox's chariot being seen at her door. Her other dupes could not doubt her noblesse or interest, when the hopes of Britain frequented her house. In short, Mrs. Grieve's parts are in universal admiration, whatever Charles's are.[21]

Mrs. Grieve gave herself out for cousin to Lord North and the Duke of Grafton, and she bribed Lord North's porter to let her into his house, while her dupes, waiting in the street below, drew conclusions from her access to the powerful minister. She lent Fox three hundred pounds and took her pay in the advertisement afforded her by the presence of his chariot standing frequently at her door. These items, as we have seen, are used by Foote in the character of Mrs. Fleece'em. That Mrs. Grieve had been transported was also a fact.

Foote's instinct for the timely never slept. In 1774 the fame of Mrs. Grieve was at its height; in another year she was superseded in the public interest by Mrs. Margaret Caroline Rudd,[22] who was clever enough to save herself when the two Perreaus, with whom she had engaged in a famous forgery, were hanged. Foote then adapted to her his description of Mrs. Fleece'em by adding a new scene from one of her well-known exploits.[23] Having bought some silk, she pretends to have left her purse at home. If the dealer will kindly accompany her to her attorney's, he may have his pay there. He steps into her carriage and is driven not to

[21] *Letters* 8. 359. In another (8. 421) he says, 'The history of Charles Fox and Mrs. Grieve is published in very wretched verse, but curious for being authentic.' See also his *Last Journals* 1. 269-70; *Memorials and Correspondence of Fox,* ed. Lord John Russell, 1. 94, and Lockhart's *Life of Scott* 5. 178-9.

[22] Account of her trial, the forgeries, etc., *Town and Country* 7. 300-4, 481-3, with portrait, 629-32; 8. 39; *Gent. Mag.* 45. 148-50, 205, 279-84. There was a perfect flood of broadsheets, etc., on the subject of Mrs. Rudd and the Perreaus.

[23] Reported *London Chron.* 39. 592, *Westminster Mag.* 4. 321-2, *Town and Country* 8. 293.

an attorney's, but to a physician's. Mrs. Fleece'em enters the office alone and tells the doctor she has brought her uncle for mental treatment. One of his symptoms, she says, is hallucination as to his identity: to-day he is calling himself a silk mercer from Ludgate Hill. She then withdraws, and the mercer applying to the attorney for his money, is put into a straight-jacket instead.

There is one further burlesque to be identified in the *Cozeners*—the episode about Mrs. Simony, who comes to solicit Mrs. Fleece'em's interest in behalf of her reverend husband. She says:

> The doctor's powers are pretty well known about town; not a more *populous* preacher within the sound of Bow-bells: I don't mean for the mobility only; *those* every canting fellow can catch; the best people of fashion ar'n't ashamed to follow my doctor; not one, madam, of the humdrum, drawling, long-winded tribe; he never crams congregations, gives them more than they can carry away; not more than ten or twelve minutes at most. . . . Even the Dowager-Duchess of Drowsy was never known to nod at my doctor; and then he doesn't pore, with his eyes close to the book, like a clerk that reads the first lesson; not he! but all extemporary, madam, with a cambric handkerchief in one hand, and a diamond ring on the other: and then he waves this way and that way; and he curtsies, and he bows, and he bounces, that all people are ready to—but then his wig, madam! I am sure you must admire his dear wig; not with the bushy, brown buckles, dangling and dropping like a Newfoundland spaniel, but short, rounded off at the ear, to show his plump cherry cheeks, white as a curd, feather-topped, and the curls as close as a cauliflower. . . . Then, my doctor is none of your schismatics, madam; believes in the whole thirty-nine! and so he would if there were nine times as many.

After a few more details about her doctor, the good wife departs, leaving behind 'a little hymn' of which the doctor desires an opinion, and of which the opinion is very favorable, since it runs to the tune of a hundred pounds.

In the winter prior to the first performance of the *Cozeners,* the valuable living of St. George's, Hanover Square,

had fallen vacant. Thereupon Lady Apsley, wife of the Chancellor, in whose gift it was, received an anonymous letter requesting her to use her influence in procuring it for a person to be named later, and offering her three thousand pounds down with a further annuity of five hundred. She took it to her husband and her husband, after ferreting out the authorship, took it to the King. The letter was from the wife of a fashionable clergyman, Dr. William Dodd, at that time chaplain to the Magdalen Hospital in London. There are many contemporary descriptions of this flashy young preacher, who aped the Methodists, while affecting to despise them. Walpole puns on his charities and his gallantries in one of those letters where we have learned to look for gossip about the folk burlesqued in Foote's plays. 'Though I write now, instead of dining, I have not a tittle to tell you that can entertain you, unless you will allow yourself to be diverted with the confusion of a methodist, as I am, who hate those knaves. So does King George, who has ordered the pure, precise Dr. Dodd to be struck off the list of his chaplains, not for gallantry with a Magdalen, as you would expect, but for offering a thumping bribe to my Lord Chancellor for the fat living of St. George's. It is droll that a young comely divine should have fallen into the sin, not of Mary the Penitent, nor of her host, Simon the Pharisee, but of Simon Magus, the founder of simony.'[24] Dodd at first denied any knowledge of what he was pleased to term the 'officious zeal of his consort.' But with his previous indiscretions of one sort and another too well known, the tide was against him. He retired to the Continent for a while, and it was during his absence in the flesh that Foote made him present to the imagination through the representation of his consort at the Haymarket under the name of Mrs. Simony. Poor Dodd suffered much greater notoriety in later days and committed more dangerous sins

[24] *Letters* 8. 413.

than buying holy wares, but with that the present story has nothing to do.[25]

As to the publication of this play, there were spurious impressions of it as well as of the *Maid of Bath* and the *Devil upon Two Sticks,* by Wheble in 1778. An injunction was obtained against him[26] by Colman, who was by that time the legal proprietor of Foote's works; and the latter brought out the first authorized edition the same year in order to supersede the others. The spurious *Cozeners* was very corrupt.

Foote's last play was the un-acted *Trip to Calais,* which after revision came on the stage as the *Capuchin.* The main items of the story have been narrated in connection with the author's life. The objects of satire besides the affair of the Duchess of Kingston, are the Romish clergy and the behavior of English folk in France.

The plot of the elopement is like the real romance of Sheridan and Elizabeth Linley. It is as if Foote felt that he had been premature in writing his *Maid of Bath* and now would complete the story as reality had furnished it to him. After the affair with Long had subsided, Elizabeth was still pursued by Mathews and in her distress, she confided in her sister and in the two sisters of Sheridan, and eventually in him also. To be rid of her annoying suitor and all the questions to which she was subjected, she conceived the idea of seeking temporary shelter in a convent in France. Sheridan undertook to conduct her thither. In London these two and Elizabeth's companion had a night's lodging at the home of a gentleman who suggested their sailing from the port of London to Dunkirk, whence they proceeded to Lille, where

[25] He was executed June 27, 1777, for forging the name of his pupil, the young Earl of Chesterfield. Dr. Johnson tried to get a reprieve for him without effect. *Town and Country* 9. 372-7 printed a full account of him with portrait. See also 6. 681-3. Percy Fitzgerald has popularized his story in a *Famous Forgery* (1865).

[26] *Gent. Mag.* 48. 95.

Elizabeth entered a convent, as planned. On their way they stopped at Calais and Elizabeth and Sheridan went through some form of marriage, which they afterwards learned was not legally binding. Linley followed the pair to Lille and brought his daughter back. The marriage remained a secret. These events, I think, furnished Foote with suggestions for his story of Jenny Minnikin and Dick Drugget.

Of the *Capuchin,* Foote's last play, it is not necessary to add anything to the account already given.

PART III

CRITICISM

The Characteristics of the Plays. Foote's Theory of Comedy. His Borrowing and Lending. The English Aristophanes

In his own day Foote was extravagantly praised. The *Dramatic Censor*[1] declared that his 'peculiarity of genius, strength of judgment, knowledge of life, selection of characters, application of satire, vivacity of sentiment, and terseness of dialogue, place him distinct from any other writer, past and present.' For the *Minor* particularly extreme claims were made, as, for example, this: 'It cannot be deemed an error of judgment, or partial favour, to pronounce this comedy, one of the most entertaining, original, and useful pieces, now in possession of the stage.'[2] One of the foremost dramatists of the period, Richard Cumberland, went so far as to say, 'I cannot recollect that scene in any play, or comic passage in any author, whose language I am master of, that I think comparable with that of Mrs. Cole in the first instance, and also with that of Smirk the auctioneer, in the second act.'[3]

Such views would not now be maintained by any one. Even when first written Foote's comedies were used at the two winter theatres chiefly as afterpieces. At his own theatre this, of course, was not so, for there his work usually filled the entire programme—ordinarily two or three plays with their respective prologues and epilogues. But the Haymarket was a summer theatre only, where serious drama was unwelcome.

[1] 2. 472.
[2] *Ibid.* 1. 351.
[3] Introd. to Cooke's *British Drama,* vol. 9.

Foote was in many ways an opportunist. He took what the moment offered, in subject, in character, in incident, even in suggestions for treatment. Final revisions of his work were frequently almost dictated by the public. There was a curious lack of sureness in his literary sense: he recognized easily the germ of popular appeal in a character or an incident, but he seemed to need the public's verdict before he could put the material into entirely satisfactory form. With him a first performance was often a failure. It was by no means uncommon for him to acknowledge failure in the public press and promise changes, as, for instance, in the original production of *Taste*. The use of the puppets in *Tragedy à la Mode* was unsuccessful at first, but later 'with *Performers,* accoutred *ridiculously pompous,* and in *fierce whiskered high tragedy,*' according to Wilkinson, 'the effect those dumb actors had . . . received unbounded applause.'[4] The *Primitive Puppet Show* was so unsatisfactory on its initial night that a huge crowd which had assembled with great expectations dispersed in extreme disorder. Notice was then published to the effect that the play was 'deferred for a few Days, in order to lengthen the Performance by producing fresh Materials.'[5] The *Cat Duets* in the *Knights* had to be withdrawn. The *Orators* was improved week by week as it was being acted. On the first production of *Dr. Last in his Chariot* 'the murmurs of pit and galleries arose to such a pitch as to prevent the conclusion of the last act,' and Foote had to come forward and explain that it was Molière and the man who had written the larger part of the adaptation that they disliked—not himself. He altered it before the next performance and then it was received 'with general satisfaction.'[6] The *Lame Lover* was another play that Foote altered soon after its first production. Finally, his masterpiece, the

[4] *Wandering Patentee* I. 285.
[5] *Pub. Ad.,* Feb. 17, 1773.
[6] *Town and Country* 1[1]. 825 f.

Minor, tremendously advertised, failed before a crowded house at its opening night in Dublin. He changed it materially before it had its great run the following summer at the Haymarket.

In studying the characteristics of the plays, the first thing, perhaps, that one notices is the recurrence of various elements that have been the common property of writers of comedy from time immemorial. Such are certain permanent comic types of character; the stupid son of admiring parents,[7] the wicked step-mother,[8] the childish wife who develops an unexpected adaptability to the ways of the world,[9] the vain middle-aged woman who fails to see the speciousness of flattery upon her vanished beauty,[10] the blue-stocking,[11] the shrewish wife,[12] the hen-pecked husband,[13] the miser,[14] the loquacious story-teller,[15] the incompetent follower of the arts,[16] the man who is consumed with eagerness for political news,[17] the fop.[18] Though the famous Mrs. Malaprop had not yet arisen to give a name to the style which she perhaps inherited from Dogberry, she has some predecessors here who use what she would doubtless have thought a very 'nice derangement of epitaphs.' Heel-Tap, who promises to speak at the Garratt hustings 'briefly with all the loquacity possible,' and Last, who is ready with his 'launcelot' to open a large 'artifice' in one of the 'juglers' of his patient, are among the best of these.

[7] Caleb (*Taste*), Tim (*Knights*), Toby Aircastle (*Cozeners*).
[8] Lady Riscounter (*Bankrupt*).
[9] Becky (*Author*).
[10] Mrs. Pentweazle (*Taste*).
[11] Mrs. Maxwell (*Devil*).
[12] Mrs. Sneak (*Mayor of Garratt*).
[13] Jerry Sneak.
[14] Flint (*Maid of Bath*), Sir Penurious Trifle (*Knights*).
[15] Sir Penurious; Aircastle (*Cozeners*).
[16] Lord Dupe (*Taste*), Sir Matthew Mite (*Nabob*), Cadwallader (*Author*).
[17] Sir Gregory Gazette (*Knights*), Squib (*Devil*).
[18] Buck (*Englishman Returned from Paris*).

Then, there are certain stock situations. There is the training of a boorish fellow for entrance into society,—Buck in the *Englishman in Paris,* Zack Fungus in the *Commissary,* Sir Matthew Mite in the *Nabob.* Tim's unwilling suit of Miss Sukey Trifle, a motive used again in the *Cozeners,* has numerous parallels in English comedy. The same is true of the screen scenes in the *Author,* the *Lame Lover,* and the *Patron.* Disguises are common, the disguised person often appearing as a German baron or a French marquis—Papillon, Cape, Sir William Wealthy, Puff, and the language master in the *Englishman in Paris.* Other disguises are of the black girl in the *Cozeners,* of Mrs. Fleece'em while fleecing the silk mercer, of Hartop, and Jenkins, and of Kitty at the end of the *Liar.* Another type of mistaken identity is in the scene of the silk mercer at the doctor's office. High life below stairs is portrayed in the scene of the two servants in the *Nabob* and of Betty and her fellow-servant in the *Lame Lover.* There is also the well-intentioned relative returning incognito after a long absence to make discoveries about his son, ward, or nephew, a situation that was particularly popular with the Sentimentalists, but used also in the Comedy of Manners by Sheridan and Goldsmith. In the main lines of the action the *Author* and the *Minor,* which depend upon this motive, are identical: a supposedly deceased parent in each case inquires into his son's affairs while in disguise and finds him worthy of his patrimony.

In plot construction Foote is weak. The *Diversions,* his first work, shows no attempt at a unified story, and this is equally true of the *Orators,* which came about midway. In the first act of the *Devil upon Two Sticks* considerable space is devoted to an elaborate characterization of the heroine's father and aunt; and after the scene is over, these two persons are never again heard of in the entire comedy. What one of the reviewers said of the *Lame Lover* is equally true of the *Maid of Bath,* 'The Drama leaves all the parties as

it found them, for as it contains no plot, there can be no catastrophe.'[19]

Almost none of Foote's plots would be seriously injured by the omission of certain events or the addition of others. It was, indeed, his habit to add new scenes as something of interest came to him from the daily press or the gossip of his club. Such for example, was the incident of Mrs. Rudd and the silk mercer, which he introduced into the *Cozeners* in order to bring up to date the character originally intended for Mrs. Grieve. Wilkinson writes of more than one such scene. 'He was then preparing his Mayor of Garratt,' he says, 'in which he had wrote a part, he informed me, that was in fact abstracted from the piece, and that he could do with or without it. . . . The part was entitled Peter Primmer and was intended as a stroke of satire levelled at Mr. Sheridan, senr.'[20] The scene of Mrs. O'Shocnesy, which Wilkinson was to have acted in the *Author,* is another instance. A report of the *Devil upon Two Sticks* speaks of 'some temporary alterations which were received with the highest approbation.' One of these was a dialogue 'in which the chicane of the law is very sarcastically depicted; and the definition of *a flaw* is finely hit off, as introduced in a particular trial a short time since, by which a certain veteran gamester escaped from punishment, after being convicted of perjury.[21]

The catastrophe is often mechanical. In the *Englishman in Paris* it is the sudden finding of Lucinda in the nick of time by her father's friend, who should have known where she was; in the *Nabob,* the uncle's payment of his brother's debts in order that his niece need not marry her rich and unwelcome suitor; in the *Bankrupt,* unexpected news from Holland which saves the hero from the impending crash.

But if Foote's comedies are lacking in well-rounded plots,

[19] *Gent. Mag.* 40. 379.
[20] *Mem.* 3. 150 f.
[21] *Town and Country* 1[1]. 241 ff.

his treatment, on the other hand, is highly dramatic. There are few makeshift explanatory scenes; asides are extremely rare; speeches are never directed to the audience, but strictly to the characters. The conversation is individualized and natural, as well as sparkling with irony. Forster states the opinion that, 'as examples of mere comic dialogue they [the plays] are perfect. Within a more limited range they have not much less than the wit, and they have more than the character, of Congreve. His people are not to be mistaken when you have once made their acquaintance; for they retain always so perfectly the trick of talk by which you knew them first, that perhaps no dramatic writings might be read aloud so easily without repetition of the speakers' names.'[22] How admirably the characters are differentiated in even the first of Foote's real comedies, the *Knights,* Miss Penelope Trifle, the stiff old maid, and the simple-minded Suke, no less than Tim and the two knights. If Tim seems too infantile for his thirty-two years, he is no more so, at any rate, than such other morons as Tony Hardcastle, and Holcroft's Sophia in the *Road to Ruin.* As burlesque surely nothing could be more chaste in a literary sense than Mother Cole's Methodist jargon—Foote saw the effectiveness of setting it forth in its pristine quality without exaggeration: one may hear it to-day in America as well as in England.

Foote depended from first to last upon the piquancy of his personalities, which the lazy public continued to regard as 'highly entertaining.' An early review of the *Maid of Bath* expressed a common sentiment: 'We have been interested without plot, surprized without incident, instructed without moral, and diverted without character.'[23] But character portrayal Foote did definitely claim. He boasted to Boswell[23a] that he had given sixteen new characters to English comedy. And if the boast, like most boasts, was extreme, it was true

[22] *Hist. and Biog. Essays* 2. 359.
[23] *London Mag.* 40. 360.
[23a] Boswell 2. 110, n.

that the whimsical men and women who galloped in their aimless fashion across his stage did captivate the imagination of those who looked upon them. Apreece and Long and Whitefield were for years popularly known by the names they had borne in Foote's characterizations; *Mrs. Cole* was often used as a generic term.

Foote's view of comedy was that of a thorough-going realist. 'Comedy,' he says, 'I define to be an exact representation of the peculiar manners of that people among whom it happens to be performed; a faithful imitation of singular absurdities, particular follies, which are openly produced, as criminals are publicly punished, for the correction of individuals, and as an example to the whole community.' He even thought that, 'a comedy's being local or temporary is so far from being a moral or critical fault, that it constitutes its chiefest merit.'[24] He resented the use of the term *farce* for his plays on the ground that their realism raised even the slenderest of them into the realm of legitimate comedy. 'No unnatural assemblages, no creatures of the fancy, can procure the protection of the *comic* muse; men and things must appear as they are,'[25] says this English Aristophanes, somewhat forgetful of certain assemblages of Birds in Cloud-Cuckoo-Land. His theory thus shows the same vagueness as his practice regarding the significance of the universal. Applying his statements to a particular case, one is tempted to ask whether his staring and head-wagging in the rôle of Cadwallader was 'openly produced for the correction' of Mr. Apreece, who alone in London had those particular mannerisms. And whether it was a needed 'example to the whole community' of that city lest they should fall into errors, to which manifestly none had shown a tendency since otherwise Apreece would not have been so easily picked out as

[24] *Letter to the Reverend Author of the Remarks Critical and Christian on the Minor.*

[25] Dedication of *Taste.*

the prototype. It may be retorted that this was subsidiary, that the real satire in Cadwallader was upon his deification of pedigree and of authorship, permanent human foibles. If so, Foote failed to secure the emphasis intended: the memory people carried away from that performance was of a burlesque of a certain individual whom they could name, whose wife they could name, whose house they could find. And what was true of Apreece in the *Author* was true of the outstanding character in nearly every one of the plays. The faults of Foote's work are in some measure due to this interpretation of the privileges of realism.

Whatever his purpose, his effect as far as the ordinary spectator was concerned was to lose the universal in the particular. For this he has paid a heavy price: oblivion. Already in the lifetime of his old associate Wilkinson his fate was lowering. 'Elizabeth Canning, Mary Squires the gipsey, and Miss Blandy,' wrote the latter, referring to the popular allusions in an early play, 'were such universal topics in 1752, that you would have supposed it the business of mankind, to talk only of them; yet now, in 1790, ask a young man of twenty-five or thirty a question relative to these extraordinary personages, and he will be puzzled to answer.'[26] If the satire in his most famous work, the *Minor,* had been directed primarily against religious hypocrisy rather than against Whitefield, that comedy might have endured; as it is, it is forgotten. While Foote still lived, his plays were assigned by the foremost critic of the age to the very class out of which their author thought their realism raised them. 'Foote has a great deal of humour,' said Boswell to Johnson.

> Johnson. 'Yes, Sir.' Boswell. 'He has a singular talent of exhibiting character.' Johnson. 'Sir, it is not a talent; it is a vice; it is what others abstain from. It is not comedy, which exhibits the character of a species, as that of a miser gathered from many misers; it is a farce, which exhibits individuals.'[27]

[26] *Mem.* 1. 27.

[27] Boswell 2. 109.

This means that the value of Foote's work is not so much that proper to literature as to history. Contemporaries recognized that he drew an accurate picture of the vices and follies of their generation, and later students of the period have not failed to point out, as Baker states it, that, 'to those who would form a perfect conception of the manners of a hundred years ago, his works are invaluable; there is not a folly, a vice, a sham of the time, which they do not expose.'[28] The following statement made in 1808 in an article on one of Foote's plays sums up the matter fairly: 'The dramatic writer, who descends to personalities, and depicts the individual instead of the species, will, if he possess genius, be extravagantly applauded by his contemporaries, and proportionably neglected by posterity. Thus it has fared with Foote.'[29]

Foote's dramas came forth from the period of Sentimentalism; but with all their notable contemporaneousness, they were not of it. While his fellows traced their literary pedigree to Steele, Lillo, and Moore, his own line went back to Fielding and Gay. He had small affinity with playwrights of the tender strain. He was not, indeed—what the Sentimentalists flattered themselves on being—'genteel': he was 'low,' as Goldsmith was.

There are, of course, exceptions. A few of his heroines are pathetic and moral and insipid, perfectly good associates for the delicate young ladies of the period. Lucinda was rather this sort on her first acquaintance with Buck in Paris, though she has picked up some spirit by the time he returns in the sequel; and there are Lucy in the *Minor,* Juliet in the *Patron,* and Lydia in the *Bankrupt.* But what are they when one thinks of Mrs. Match'em, Mrs. Mechlin, Mrs. Fleece'em, Mrs. Cole, Mrs. Sneak, and Lady Kitty Crocodile? These are Foote's memorable women. In fact, he almost never devotes much attention to sentimental characters.

[28] *Eng. Actors* 1. 256. [29] *Monthly Mirror* N. S. 3. 316.

A few of his plots, too, show traces of the prevailing style in sentiment. A specific teaching, for example, is found in the moral reflections of the *Englishman Returned from Paris.* Buck's guardian, finding his tutor a worthless intriguer and pander to his pupil's weaknesses, soliloquizes:

> But can it be strange, whilst the parent negligently accepts a superficial recommendation to so important a trust, that the person whose wants, perhaps, more than his abilities make desirous of it, should consider the youth as a kind of property, and not study what to make him, but what to make of him; and thus prudently lay a foundation for his future sordid hopes, by a criminal compliance with the lad's present prevailing passions?

The closing words of this comedy are in the most approved style of Sentimental Drama, which always takes care that the moral shall be apparent in the final speech:

> But, before we close the scene, receive, young man, this last advice from the old friend of your father: as it is your happiness to be born a Briton, let it be your boast also; know, that the blessings of liberty are your birth-right, which, while you preserve, other nations may envy or fear, but can never conquer or contemn you. Believe, that French fashions are as ill-suited to the genius, as their politics are pernicious to the peace of your native land.

The *Nabob* also concludes with a moral aphorism of general application. But for the most part, when Foote's plays conclude in didactic strain, they at least stick to the case in hand. And some, like the *Lame Lover* and the *Mayor of Garratt,* flaunt themselves at the very curtain unregenerate as Etherege or Wycherley.

If Foote is less eager than the Sentimentalists to inculcate ethical notions, he is, on the other hand, less easily satisfied with shallow and formal adjustments of moral situations. The *Englishman Returned from Paris* is an instance. The climactic situation in this play comes ultimately from Mrs. Centlivre's *Artifice,* where the identical device is used by the heroine, Louise, in retribution for precisely the same dis-

honorable proposals that Buck makes to Lucinda. The obligation is plainly indicated in the substantial reproduction of certain speeches. Louise, however, marries her faithless Ned, owing to the priest's arriving before he has time to repent of his repentance; and Mrs. Centlivre is as well pleased as Richardson is when he has rewarded his 'virtuous serving-maid' with the worthless hand of Mr. B. If Foote's reader feels at times critical of his taste and his morals, let him remember that in all his many stories he never indulges in such prudential casuistry.

Foote occasionally uses a Sentimental situation as the basis of a plot, as, for example, in the *Minor* (Sir George's rescue of Lucy); but the play as a whole does not bear the characteristics of the type. His nearest approach to the Sentimental Drama, the *Bankrupt,* has been described, and the probable reason given for its taking this form, which was not originally intended. The fact has also been mentioned that the very season in which the *Bankrupt* appeared, Foote made an attack upon the type in his *Piety in Pattens.*

The pendulum had now begun to swing away from Sentimental Drama and Foote's criticism was part of a general movement. In 1768 Kelly with his *False Delicacy* had easily overshadowed Goldsmith's *Good-natured Man;* in 1771 nothing could equal the success of Cumberland's *West Indian.* Sentimentality could go no further. The year of Foote's *Nabob* Goldsmith published his second brilliant attack on the *Comédie Larmoyante* in an *Essay on the Theatre, or, a Comparison between Laughing and Sentimental Comedy,* and was soon to offer his second example of a comedy that was not pathetic. *She Stoops to Conquer* was reluctantly produced by Colman at Covent Garden in March, 1773.[30] It was the month before this that Foote produced his *Piety in Pattens.*

[30] Foote acted in this play at the Haymarket the same summer (G. H. Nettleton, *English Drama of the Restoration and Eighteenth Century,* p. 284).

If Cradock was right in saying that Goldsmith was to have been satirized in this farce, it is only another instance of the inconsistency between Foote's avowed interest in a general principle and his actual pursuit of personal burlesque, for at this very moment Goldsmith's Kate Hardcastle and her half-brother were getting ready to play their knavish tricks at Covent Garden and show London what it was to laugh without a tear in the eye. It surely would have confused issues to introduce into a satire on Sentimentalism any critical treatment—even a merely personal one—of the most outstanding opponent of Sentimentalism, specially at the moment when his opposition was most conspicuous.

Goldsmith's influence upon Sentimental Comedy is better remembered than Foote's because he was a greater dramatist; but it was not in reality more significant. Davies asserted that 'Piety in Pattens was a charm as powerful in demolishing that species of comedy which the French term *larmoyante,* as the Rehearsal was in banishing the rants and bombast of Dryden and other writers.'[31] Ernest Bernbaum makes the statement in his recent study of Sentimental Drama that Foote 'had a larger comprehension of the nature of the *genre* than any of its other antagonists since Vanbrugh. Most of the attacks upon it,' he continues, 'both before Foote's time and thereafter, were directed against its sententious style and serious tone. Foote struck deeper, and made ridiculous the sentimental desire to idealize common life.'[32]

The play of Foote's which has been called his 'nearest approach to legitimate comedy,'[33] the *Mayor of Garratt,* was thus classified, no doubt, on account of its utter lack of any of the elements of Sentimental Drama; for that type, certainly, is as far removed from pure comedy as any type there is. The intrigue in the *Mayor of Garratt,* as stated in a

[31] *Garrick* 2. 145.
[32] *The Drama of Sensibility,* p. 242 f.
[33] *Chambers' Edinburgh Journal* 7. 230.

previous chapter, is quite in the Restoration spirit. Sneak and Bruin with their respective wives have been easily recognized as descendants of Bisket and Fribble with their respective wives in *Epsom Wells,* and the scene where Sneak peeps through the key-hole of the summer-house in Act 2 was doubtless suggested by a scene in the same play.

Though Foote did not have the mournful view of comedy, he claimed a purpose as serious as that of the Sentimentalists. While repudiating the standards of those dramatists who held that 'laughter's a distorted passion' and therefore 'chose with pity to chastise delight,'[34] he nevertheless maintained that his province was that of a reformer. He too would chastise; only he would do it by means of satire, which he regarded as the real differentia of comedy, whose province is to deal not with the woes, but with the follies of men. Ridicule, he said, is often the only antidote for folly. But his excessive indulgence in personal burlesque casts doubt upon his sincerity. A dramatic critic wrote in 1770 that he 'studiously, and in the most agreeable manner, impresses moral inferences upon such of his audience as chuse to think.'[35] But many others agree with Doran that, 'he did not care for the suppression of vice, but if he who attempted to suppress it had a foible, or a strongly marked characteristic, Foote laid hold of him, and made him look like a fool or a rascal, in the eyes of a too willing audience.'

In the introduction to the *Minor* Foote speaks of resorting to the Comic Muse to deal with 'a madness that argument can never cure' in the hope that the 'archness and severity of her smile may redress an evil, that the laws cannot reach, or reason reclaim.' This 'madness' is what in the language of the time was termed 'enthusiasm,' by which was meant specifically the religious ardor of the Methodists, and Foote at no point dissociates it from cant. It is no great marvel that

[34] See epilogue to Steele's *Lying Lover.*
[35] *Dramatic Censor* 2. 472 f.

hosts of prosaic men misunderstood the intensely emotional, mystic soul of Whitefield, that they failed to differentiate his burning zeal from the cant of certain hypocrites who found it convenient to pretend to his faith. But Foote presumed to teach. And yet he did not turn his satire upon those phases of Methodism that were really open to just criticism; he spent his excellent powers upon a personal pasquinade that was as false as it was cruel. He had attended Whitefield's meetings, had noticed the cast in his eye, had caught his trick of phrase and a superficial notion of his doctrines. Thus equipped he produced the characters of Dr. Squintum and Mrs. Cole. The inference is natural that his motive was not wholly reformatory. Could it be that he even knowingly misrepresented Whitefield, merely because Whitefield had indulged in that cheap pun—that 'the Devil would make a football of him'? That Foote could stoop to this sort of revenge is well known. But it can scarcely explain the *Minor*.

In his *Letter to the Reverend Author of the Remarks Critical and Christian on the Minor* is this significant statement: 'I shall not enter into a dispute with you upon the principles delivered at the Tabernacle. Your forms are above my comprehension; and, indeed, I believe, your own. When we want an explanation of *regeneration,* the *new birth,* and that strange kind of spiritual commerce, which you pretend to carry on with superior invisible agents, you refer us to feelings which, as we never experienced, we can never understand.' He saw only the ugly externals of Methodism—and they were, doubtless, ugly enough—he failed utterly to see its soul, because he had no insight into spiritual verities. In replying to the *Remarks Critical and Christian* he apparently made no effort to penetrate the doctrines that he undertook to refute. Justification by faith, the new birth, and the mystical communion of the soul with its God are treated in the *Minor* as doctrines peculiar to Whitefield and the Methodists, and this is not corrected in the *Letter*.

Boswell once remarked to Johnson that Foote was an infidel. Johnson replied:

> 'I do not know, Sir, that the fellow is an infidel; but if he be an infidel, he is an infidel as a dog is an infidel; that is to say, he has never thought upon the subject.' BOSWELL. 'I suppose, Sir, he has thought superficially, and seized the first notions which occurred to his mind.' JOHNSON. Why then, Sir, still he is like a dog, that snatches the piece next him.'[36]

His preaching was not only shallow; it was often in direct opposition to his practice. He had said in his introduction to the *Minor* that he regarded affectation as 'the true comic object,' and that it was not the business of comedy to touch upon anything in the nature of an "accidental unhappiness.' This was quoted by critics of the play; and driven to defend himself, he made the following statement:

> Your next remark, I think, was upon the cruelty and indecency of producing your friend at the Theatre, on the score only of a mere natural infirmity; an inconsiderable weakness in the optic nerve; which, instead of retaining the eyes in the reciprocal direction they are generally placed in, lets them loose to run rambling about the head. This criticism you sustain by an observation of my own, that provincial dialects are not the proper objects of comedy; and if not dialects, surely much less natural infirmities.—*Granted.*
>
> But if men, with these infirmities, will attempt things, which those very infirmities have rendered incapable of properly executing, it is their own fault if the source that should acquire them compassion degenerates into a fountain of ridicule. My Lord Lanesborouh's gout would have hardly found a place in Mr. Pope's page, if it had not hobbled a minuet at court; nor should *Dr. Squintum* have shown the whites of his eyes at the Haymarket, if he had confined his circumspection to the tap-room of the Bell, at Gloucester; or, after his admission to the ministry, modestly submitted to the decent duties of a country cure. But if, in despight of art and nature, not content with depreciating

[36] Boswell *2.* 109 f.

> every individual of his own order; with a countenance not only inexpressive, but ludicrous; a dialect not only provincial, but barbarous; a deportment not only awkward, but savage; he will produce himself to the whole public, and there deliver doctrines equally heretical and absurd, in a language at once inelegant and ungrammatical, he must expect to have his pretensions to oratory derided, his sincerity suspected, and the truth of his mission denied.[37]

On this principle, if one may be pardoned for resorting to the *argumentum ad hominem,* Foote himself ought to have retired from the stage in 1766, when he suffered his accident. Instead, he began his managership of the Haymarket and acted steadily for the next ten years. His lameness was extremely obvious and he knew it.[38]

If one is to find fault with Foote for inconsistencies, indeed, there is plenty of material. In the introduction to the *Minor* he represents himself as declining to deal in national characteristics—dialect he 'cannot think either a subject of satire or of humour'; yet he had been very ready to let the audience clap Tim's Cornish speech in the *Knights* and was thereafter to make great fun with Johnny Macpherson in the *Devil upon Two Sticks* and Lady Catherine Coldstream in the *Maid of Bath* and La Jeunesse in the *Trip to Calais,* not to mention others. He also represents himself as refusing point blank to burlesque the actors, and from principle—*that* from the author of the *Diversions of the Morning!* And when asked if he will not treat his audience with a modern amour or a state intrigue, he replies, 'And so amuse the public ear at the expense of private peace. You must excuse me.' Shades of Langford, Macklin, Apreece, Sheridan, Faulkner, Newcastle, Dodington, Garrick, Wilkin-

[37] *A Letter to the Reverend Author, etc.*

[38] Wilkinson tells in his *Wandering Patentee* (p. 280 ff.) how an audience hissed his performance of one of Foote's parts because they missed the limp which they had become accustomed to, though the character was not lame (Major Sturgeon in the *Mayor of Garratt*).

son, Brocklesby, Long, Elizabeth Chudleigh, Jackson—what next!

Or take the *Bankrupt*. That play criticises the newspapers for the publishing of personal scandal. The strictures were doubtless justified. But so also was a certain journalist's retort. 'Surely,' said he, 'an attack upon the Press, in favour of private characters, did not belong to Mr. Foote—to Mr. Foote, who has alone attacked more characters, and with greater severity, than all the Presses in the nation. Does Mr. Foote, who in the very Prologue, which introduces the *Bankrupt takes off* private characters, give us immediately a lecture upon attacking private characters?'[39]

There is no doubt that his sharp pen had a tremendous power in his day. 'That by the death of Foote, the public lost a great check on notorious vice and fashionable irregularity,' wrote Davies, 'no man will deny. Peter Aretine, who, by his satires, raised contributions on all the princes of Europe, nay, bragged of receiving hush-money from the emperor of the Turks, was not more dreaded than Foote.'[40] But the question is: To what end was this power exerted? Davies' use of the term *hush-money* is unpleasantly suggestive. It is too strong, but Foote's biography makes it clear, I think, that he did often regard his power of writing and acting as a weapon ready to be whipped out against any personal foe of his own. Thus he attempted to frighten Rich out of allowing Wilkinson to produce one of his plays at Covent Garden; thus he would have paid off a score against Dr. Johnson with his *Orators;* thus he intended to wreak his jealousy on Garrick in *Drugger's Jubilee*. It was currently believed that the *Trip to Calais* was an attempt at blackmail, a false supposition probably; but the supposition that its sequel, the *Capuchin,* was brought out for revenge is not false. His threat, too, of burlesquing the Duchess of King-

[39] *Whitehall Eve. Post* July 22-4, 1773.
[40] *Garrick* 2. 268.

ston in a performance of Steele's Lady Brumpton if the prohibition on Lady Kitty Crocodile was not removed, has an unpleasant inference.

Writers on Whitefield speak of Foote as a 'tool' of Whitefield's enemies, who 'employed' him to write the *Minor*. But this, I think, there is no reason to believe. What he did with Whitefield is just what he did with George Faulkner and many another man or woman who was well enough known to raise a laugh when mimicked in public.

The impression Foote has left upon students of the drama is thus expressed by Thomas Wright: 'He was in all respects the great theatrical caricaturist of the age. The personality of the satire was the grand characteristic of Foote's performances, and one which rendered them dangerous to society and certainly not to be approved. An affront to the actor was at any time enough to cause the offender to be dragged before the world; and matter in itself of the most libellous description was published without danger, under the fictitious name of a character, the resemblance of which to the original was sufficiently evident to the town. From such tribunals, neither elevation in society nor respectability of character is a protection.'[41]

In concluding our study of the characteristics of the plays, there remains for consideration the matter of Foote's literary obligations. Historians of the drama have a somewhat unfair habit of speaking as though he were peculiarly given to literary robbery. For example, Doran says of the *Patron* that, 'as in all his pieces, with much original wit, there was rank, though judicious plagiarism.'[42] Now Foote's own preface to the play frankly states that it is 'founded on a story of M. Marmontel's.' Although he does not name the story, plagiarism seems scarcely a fair term for the candid dramatization of a prose narrative with the name of the original

[41] Quoted W. C. Russell, *Representative Actors*, p. 135.
[42] *Annals* 3. 379.

author attached. Except in two cases, Foote's use of sources can be shown, I think, to be in keeping with the general practice among writers. Those two cases are the *Englishman Returned from Paris,* and the *Minor.* His culpability is unfortunately clear enough in regard to the former. With the latter it is a trifle less clear.

The *Minor* was first put upon the boards in 1760. On April 20 of the following year a play by Joseph Reed was thus announced in the *Public Advertiser:*

> The latter End of this Week a new Farce will be exhibited at Drury-Lane called *The Register Office,* written, it is said, by an ingenious Gentleman in the City, in which Mr. Foote is to perform a Character.

The action was slight: Maria, Harwood's housekeeper, who has left his employ in order to escape his advances, is followed to London and found by him through the agency of an employment bureau. The two acts consist mainly of scenes between Gulwell, the swindling proprietor of the bureau, and his customers. One of the customers is Mrs. Snarewell, who enters complaining of her 'rhumatise' precisely as Mrs. Cole does, and mixing her infamous schemes with talk of Mr. Watchlight.

> The dear Man was so fervent in his Prayers, and so earnest in his Ejaculations, that I received great Comfort and Consolation . . . . Oh! he's a most Heavenly Creature! He said such comfortable, *moving* Things!—But what success had the Advertisement?[43]

The resemblance to the *Minor* is strong in the character of Mrs. Snarewell, her statements about Mr. Watchlight, her use of the employment agency, her talk of her health, of her

[43] Cf. quotation, p. 82 above.

conversion, of her business, even in her language. 'Well, I must be going,' she says,

> I have promised Mr. *Watchlight* to be at the tabernacle, to return Thanks for my Recovery—He will preach a *Thanksgiving* Sermon, and Sing an *occasional* Hymn of his own Composing after the Discourse.

With this compare the following from the *Minor:*

> She bade me say, she just stopt in her way to the tabernacle; after the exhortation, she says, she'll call again.

and Mrs. Cole's speech,

> To-morrow I hope to suit you—We are to have, at the tabernacle, an occasional hymn, with a thanksgiving sermon for my recovery.

Reed published the play immediately and in the preface he said,

> As there is a *palpable Similarity* between the Character of Mrs. Cole in the *Minor,* and Mrs. *Snarewell* in the foregoing Performance; it may not be unnecessary to declare, that the *Register-Office was put into Mr. Foote's* Hands in August 1758 on his promise of playing it at one of the Patent-Theatres in the ensuing Season.

It is curious that he says nothing of other likenesses, for if Foote appropriated the character of Mrs. Snarewell from him, he must also have taken that of Mr. Watchlight, and the use of the register-office as a decoy for the heroine. The author of an *Additional Scene to the Comedy of the Minor,* published three months before the *Register-Office* was acted, made this positive statement:

> Mr. Reed put, some time ago, a farce into Mr. F....'s hands, . . . in order to procure his opinion of it, and his interest in bringing it upon the stage. This farce, instead of being returned to Mr. Reed, or shewn to the manager, was detained by Mr. F.... to serve his own purpose, and from whence he not only stole the hint of the bawd, but purloin'd also several speeches almost entire.

While the indications are certainly against Foote, the case does not seem entirely proved, for before either of these statements was made the *Minor* was well known to all who would be likely to see or read the *Register-Office*. Reed's play might therefore need some excuse for being. As usual, Foote fared better than his rival. Mrs. Snarewell was not allowed to be acted,[44] though Mrs. Cole had been on the same stage only five days previous speaking almost the identical speeches and in no way less offensive.

John Adolphus says in his *Memoirs of John Bannister*[45] that while everybody knows that Foote's Cadwallader 'consecrated to permanent ridicule . . . a worthy Welsh baronet, . . . it is not so well known that the idea of the robustious husband and his very silly wife is derived from Dryden's unsuccessful and long-forgotten comedy of "Limberham."' It seems to me very unlikely that *Limberham* furnished any hints for the *Author;* on the other hand, Dryden's Mrs. Saintly in this play may well have been the source for Mrs. Cole in the *Minor*. However, if Foote did depend on Reed for Mrs. Cole, her relation to Mrs. Saintly would be fairly remote.

Other dependence of Foote's on Restoration comedy may be noted here. Shadwell's *Epsom Wells* is the source of a scene in the *Mayor of Garratt;* Vanbrugh's *Confederacy* of one in the *Cozeners*—the scene between Col. Gorget and Mrs. Aircastle. Mrs. Aircastle has many prototypes, the most notable of whom is Margery Pinchwife in Wycherley's *Country Wife*. There are also manifest obligations to Jonson's *Alchemist* in the *Cozeners*.

Foote's sources in French comedy are considerable. He used Le Sage, Corneille, d'Ancourt, and particularly Molière. In the *Commissary,* for instance, the idea of the various 'masters' and the lessons in fencing and elocution come from

[44] Genest 4. 612.
[45] 1. 67.

Molière's *Bourgeois Gentilhomme,* while the old widow in search of a young husband, the character and business of Mrs. Mechlin, the child of the music-master, and the circumstance of sending the infant in a bass viol come from d'Ancourt's *Femme d'Intrigue.*

In the prologue to the *Liar* Foote fathered that play on Lope de Vega. He complained that he was said to copy individuals to the neglect of manners and that whatever character he painted, 'the true original' was quickly proclaimed. But says he,

> . . . in the following group let no one dare
> To claim a limb, nay, not a single hair:
> What gallant Briton can be such a sot
> To own the child a Spaniard has begot?

This apparently frank acknowledgment has been taken as an attempt to cover some real disingenuousness[46]; and it is true that if he was actually acquainted with the Spanish play that he means to have us believe his source, he made an odd mistake in ascribing it to the same wrong author that Pièrre Corneille had ascribed it to when he adapted it for the French theatre. The play he must have had in mind is *la Verdad Sospechosa* by Don Juan Ruiz de Alarcón. Since he never hits upon a variant that recalls this play, he must have known it only through the medium of Corneille's *Menteur,* to which he owes obvious debts. Inasmuch as he was working on an edition of translations of 'all the best French comedies'[47] at the time he wrote the *Liar,* of course he knew Corneille. It is possible that he was also acquainted with an anonymous translation of *le Menteur* entitled the *Mistaken Beauty, or the Lyar, a Comedy acted by their Majesties Servants at the Royal Theatre, London, 1685,* which is the apparent source of Steele's *Lying Lover.* In any case he had recourse to

[46] Genest 4. 649; Dorothy Canfield Fisher, *Corneille and Racine in England,* p. 124.

[47] See full title of Foote's *Comic Theatre.*

Steele. His plot is closer to Corneille than to Steele, but a few passages common to Foote and Steele and not found in Corneille establish an acquaintance on his part with Steele's play, though it is evident that it was not his main source. Some writers have gone so far as to speak of the *Liar* as 'an adaptation' of the *Lying Lover*.[48] This greatly exaggerates Foote's indebtedness, since all the main elements of plot and character that originate with Steele are omitted by him.

Although it was over half a century since the *Lying Lover* had been written, it is possible that Foote may not have cared to revive the memory of it in connection with the *Liar*. But he was scarcely so self-distrustful as to be unaware that his own was distinctly the better of the two plays. His treatment is more rapid, more interesting, and more true to nature. Steele has spoiled a comic story with sentimental drivel. In fact, Foote has nothing to lose by comparison with either of his sources, and somewhat to gain. The conclusion in *le Menteur* is mechanical, depending on an ill motivated change of the hero's mind as to the girl he wishes to marry. Foote's device in the scene with Kitty produces a perfectly natural relinquishment of Miss Grantam and the psychological error of making him immediately prefer Miss Godfrey is avoided. Foote has added not a little to Corneille's plot—the character and history of Papillon as well as the scene with Kitty—but nothing that drags like Steele's long sentiments. Again he evinces his disagreement with the *comédie larmoyante:* while Steele presented his teaching through diatribes on duelling and the melodramic incident of Lovemore's supposed death, Foote returned to the method of pure satire used by Corneille.

These are Foote's appropriations from other writers. There is another side to the matter—others' appropriations from him. A reviewer of the *Nabob* prophesied in 1772[49]:

[48] E.g. Brander Matthews, *Actors and Actresses of Great Britain and the United States* 1. 144.

[49] *London Mag.* 41. 310.

'Few of his pieces will be amusing to posterity; because his principal characters are supported by his own powers; but they will be plundered of their richness by the hungry wits of future times.' In the case of the play under review the prophecy was fulfilled by Joanna Baillie in her *Election*. The *Nabob* apparently suggested the following items: the class feeling between the two brothers, the love affair between the cousins, the buying up of the creditor's claims by the gentleman's rich enemy, the rich tradesman's offer of buying an East India post for the gentleman's son, the paying of the gentleman's debts by the brother, the use of the election.

Murphy, who lent to Foote, seems also to have borrowed from him. The character of Mrs. Bromley in his *Know Your Own Mind* is strikingly like Lady Kitty Crocodile, both in her pretended grief and in her treatment of the young woman who is her protégée. *Know Your Own Mind* was first produced February 22, 1777, at Covent Garden. Murphy said that he had had the play by him even longer than Horace requires; but if this were, indeed, the case, one feels that he profited by the delay and wrote it over with help from Foote's *Trip to Calais,* which though never acted, was well known at this time.

Take the *Patron*. John Tobin's *School for Authors* was no sooner on the stage than its 'strong resemblance' to this comedy of Foote's was recognized.[50] There are close parallels in the character of the connoisseur, his niece, her lover, the boy's assuming responsibility for the uncle's play, and some of the scenes. Though it is not impossible, it is unlikely that the author worked directly from Marmontel, since Foote's dramatization was well known and accessible. The *School for Authors,* it may be added, is inferior to the *Patron* in interest, in motivation, and in style.

Thomas Holcroft used Foote's material in two plays. The *Deserted Daughter,* a story of a girl who has been cast out

[50] *Monthly Mirror* 4. 383 f. and n.

by her father and is rescued from an evil woman by her father's ward, who marries her, must be based on the *Minor*. In the *Road to Ruin* the vacillating character of the elder Dornton seems like an elaboration of that of Sir Robert Riscounter in Foote's *Bankrupt,* and the cruel step-mother, with the fact, though not the manner, of her exposure may have been suggested by Lady Riscounter. A similar plot motive is found in the bankruptcy that is forestalled in the nick of time.

A more important writer who read Foote to his own advantage was Goldsmith, though he took but little. Lofty in the *Good-natured Man* may have got his name from Foote's Patron and his character from Sir Luke Limp in the *Lame Lover*.

The hungriest of these 'hungry wits' was Richard Brinsley Sheridan, who was perhaps only taking back his own from the man who had used his family in five farces. Father Paul in the *Duenna* reminds one of Foote's priest in the *Capuchin*. There are several striking comparisons between the *Knights* and the *Rivals,*—with Miss Penelope Trifle and Sukey compare Mrs. Malaprop and Lydia Languish, and with the elder woman's conversation with Sir Gregory in the one play compare that with Sir Anthony in the other. Both the character and the circumstances of Charles Surface in the *School for Scandal* are closely modelled on those of Sir George Wealthy in the *Minor*. Little Premium and Little Moses recall Little Transfer; the return of Sir Oliver in disguise recalls both that of Sir William Wealthy in the *Minor* and that of Governor Cape in the *Author;* the way the boy measures up to his elder's hopes is similar in all three plays.

Of other obligations owed by and to Foote it is not necessary to speak, for the most important of them have been treated in earlier chapters. On this sort of literary commerce, I like Foote's own reply to the criticism upon a certain author who borrowed from Terence, 'Well, and what then? Why do we take such Pains to create an Intimacy with the obsolete

Gentry, if they don't help us out now and then at a dead Lift?'[51]

To 'the obsolete gentry' Foote himself now belongs. And none of his numerous comedies holds a place of importance in enduring literature. What then, is his significance for the modern reader?

'Supposing Wilkes for leading man in a country constantly plunging into war under some plumed Lamachus,' says George Meredith,[52] 'with enemies periodically firing the land up to the gates of London, and a Samuel Foote, of prodigious genius, attacking him with ridicule, I think it gives a notion of the conflict engaged in by Aristophanes.' By Aristophanes, but not by Foote. For such work he had not the large view, the noble purpose, the philosophy of life. The name which the flattery of his friends gave him—the English Aristophanes—was due to wholly superficial likenesses. He resembled the Greek in his humor, which was broad, easy, reckless; in his biting satire; and especially in the audacity with which he ridiculed vice and hypocrisy in the persons of certain individuals, whom he presented with unrivalled vividness. But he had not the great imagination of Aristophanes, that wonderful power to transport real persons into an ideal world, and to generalize the particulars taken from reality. Above all, he has not one touch of the great gift of poetry which makes the Greek comedy survive the changes of taste that have affected some of its once most popular elements.

Foote, I think, would be content with posterity if it would write of him as he once wrote of Molière: 'There can't be a stronger proof of the peculiar merit of Moliere than the testimony of his contemporary writers; one of whom assures us, that fifteen days representation of his *Femmes Scavantes* put an entire stop to female pedantry at Paris. One advantage too attended the performances of this author, that the

[51] *Essay on Comedy.*
[52] *Essay on Comedy.*

original of the principal character in almost every piece was thoroughly known to the audience. *George Dandin* and the *Cocu Imaginaire* were two remarkable tradesmen in Paris. The duke de Montaunfiere was acknowledged the *Misanthrope,* and *Oronte,* known for the duke de St. Aignan; the first president sat for *Tartuffe* and Monsieur Rohant for the *Bourgeois Gentilhomme,* whilst Menage and the Abbe Cossin, in the characters of Vadius and Tripotin, heightened the public relish for the *Femmes Scavantes.* From the fidelity with which these well-known originals were copied, we must allow Moliere a plenary possession of that first great comic requisite, character.'[53] With the substitution of other names, this is what Foote would have said of himself.

Posterity, however, places him neither with Aristophanes nor with Molière. If he challenges attention, it is for his own extraordinary qualities. It is true that his plays are not great works of art; but they have a value in preserving intensely the color of eighteenth century life. Through them and through his biography we get a vivid sense of its fashions, its foibles, its problems; of early Methodism, of the theatrical circles of London during the entire period of the great Garrick's managership, of many interesting men and women. Above all, there is Foote's own captivating personality. If he had astounding faults, he had also astounding merits. Whatever the odds, he was never baffled. His daring, his originality, and his ability to succeed were superb.

[53] Introduction to Foote's *Comic Theatre.*

FOOTE'S PLAYS WITH NOTES ON STAGE PRODUCTIONS

(Dates are for the calendar year, not the theatrical season. In the cases of the *Diversions* and its sequels, and the *Orators,* the dates of first productions refer to the entertainments in their earliest form, rather than in their final more dramatic versions.)

Name of play	First Production	No. Performances first year	Other years in which performed in London
The Diversions of the Morning	Apr. 22, 1747, Hay.	1	1758, '59, '60, '63, '7
A Dish of Chocolate (A Cup of Tea)	Apr. 24, 1747, Hay.	51	1748, '49, '53, '59, '61, '63
An Auction of Pictures	Apr. 18, 1748, Hay.	47	1749
The Knights	Apr. 3, 1749, Hay.	19	1754, '61, '63-5, '67 '69, '71, '72, '76
Taste	Jan. 11, 1752, D. L.	5	1755, '56, '58, '61, '62 '69, '70, '71, '73, '7
The Englishman in Paris	Mar. 24, 1753, C. G.	13	1754-68, 1770-80
A Writ of Inquiry on the Inquisitor General	Dec. 16, 1754, Hay.	12	1755
The Englishman Returned from Paris	Feb. 3, 1756, C. G.	24	1757-63, '70
The Green-Room Squabble	Summer 1756, Hay.	1	
The Author	Feb. 5, 1757, D. L.	28	1758, '69, '70-9, 1787 in America
Tragedy à la Mode	Jan. 4, 1760, Crow St., Dublin [Date of first London performance undetermined]		1761, '62, '64, '65
The Minor	Jan. 28, 1760, Crow St., Dublin		
	June 28, 1760, Hay.	49	1761-80
The Liar	Jan. 12, 1762, C. G.	11	1763-71, '75-80, '92, 1802, '05, '18, '19, '96
The Orators	May 1, 1762, Hay.	36	1763-9, '71, '73, '75, '76
The Trial of Samuel Foote, Esq. for a Libel on Peter Paragraph	May 18, 1763, Hay.		
The Mayor of Garratt	June 20, 1763, Hay.	40	1764-80, '93, 1824

Name of play	First Production	No. Performances first year	Other years in which performed in London
The Patron	June 26, 1764, Hay.	14	1765, '67, '70-2, '74-6
The Commissary	June 10, 1765, Hay.	28	1766, '67, '69-79, '93
An Occasional Prelude ..	May 29, 1767, Hay.	10	
The Devil upon Two Sticks	May 30, 1768, Hay.	19	1769-80, '85, '87
Dr. Last's Examination before the College of Physicians			
Dr. Last in his Chariot (some scenes by Foote)	June 21, 1769, Hay.		
[*Wilkes*	Never Acted]		
The Lame Lover	June 22, 1770, Hay.	15	1771, '75, 1872
The Maid of Bath	June 26, 1771, Hay.	25	1772-7
The Nabob	June 29, 1772, Hay.	24	1773-7
The Primitive Puppet Show (including *Piety in Pattens*)	Feb. 15, 1773, Hay.	19	1774-80, '93
The Bankrupt	July 21, 1773, Hay.	19	1774-6
The Cozeners	July 15, 1774, Hay.	17	1775, '76, '78
A Trip to Calais	Never Acted		
The Capuchin	Aug. 19, 1776, Hay.	10	

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